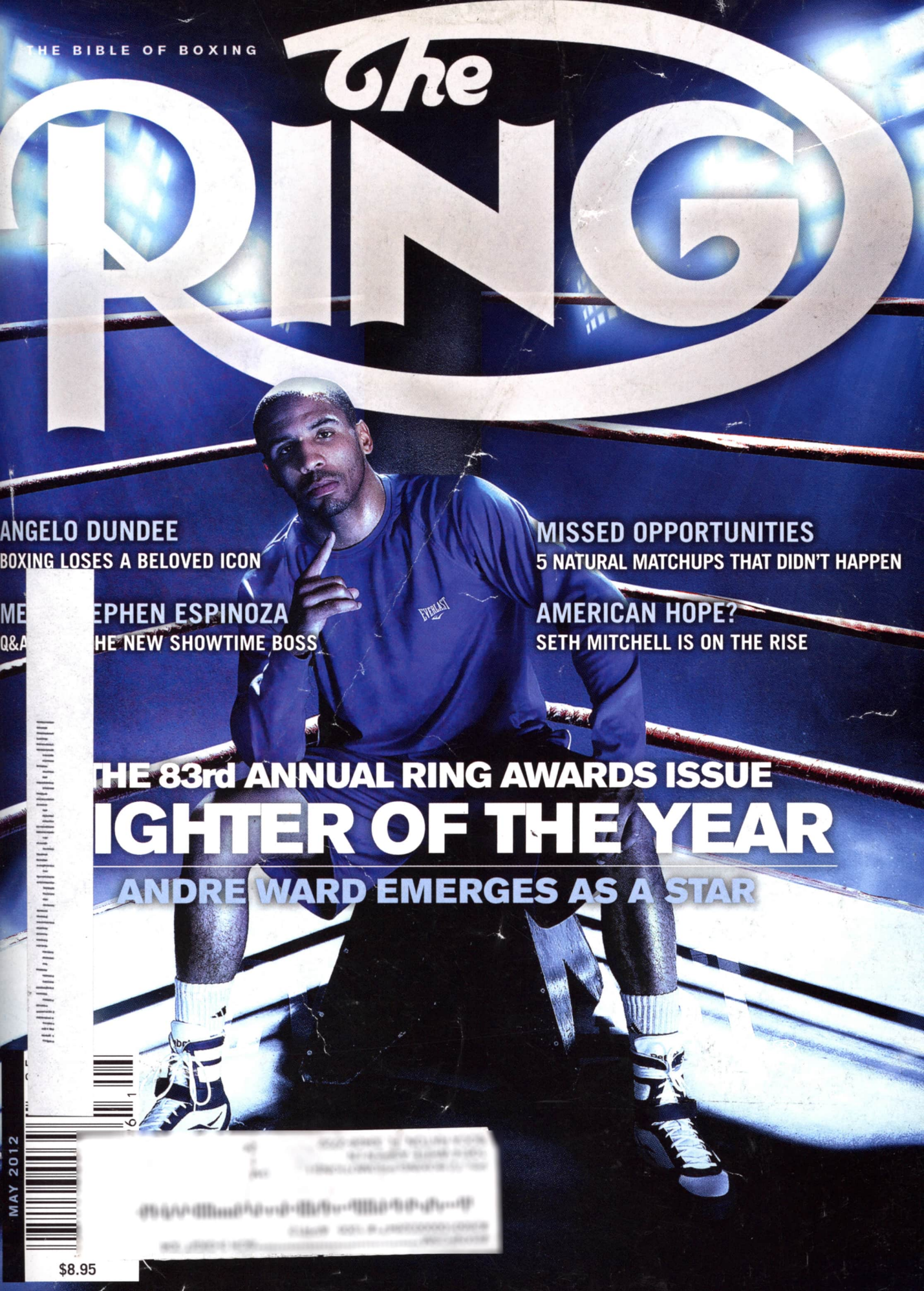
THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING



ANGELO DUNDEE
BOXING LOSES A BELOVED ICON

ME EPHEN ESPINOZA
Q&A HE NEW SHOWTIME BOSS

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES
5 NATURAL MATCHUPS THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN

AMERICAN HOPE?
SETH MITCHELL IS ON THE RISE

THE 83rd ANNUAL RING AWARDS ISSUE

IGHTER OF THE YEAR

ANDRE WARD EMERGES AS A STAR

MAY 2012

$8.95

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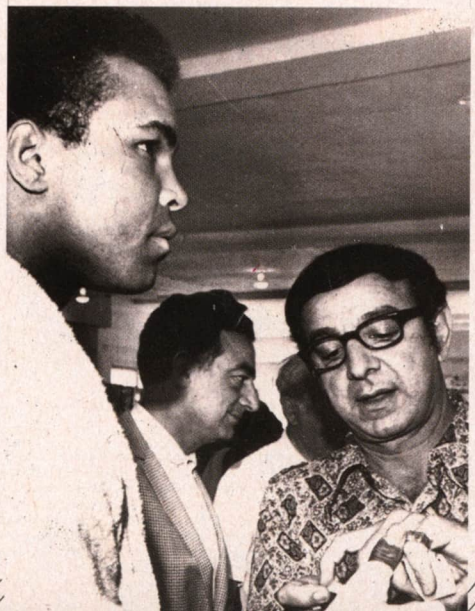

A DEBACLE IN TEXAS

By **Michael Rosenthal**

The fights themselves were fine. WBC middleweight titleholder Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. easily outpointed Marco Antonio Rubio on Feb. 4 in San Antonio, demonstrating again that he's better than many had believed. And Nonito Donaire made a successful debut at 122 pounds by handling capable Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. fairly easily.

Other aspects of the night were disturbing to say the least.

The most-baffling incident was the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation's failure to conduct drug tests after the fights mentioned above, which violated their own policies and those of the World Boxing Council.

The excuse put forth by Texas? We forgot. (Roll eyes.)

The authorities apparently took specimens for fighters in an undercard match but then realized that they failed to enlist the services of an independent testing laboratory. Thus, they abandoned testing for the night.

Yes, this actually happened. The only thing I can say for Texas is that the TDLR took blame for the screw up, which is better than nothing.

Then there was something that drove me mad. The Mexico-based WBC uses open scoring in its title fights in some other countries. And that's fine. They have their reasons. However, we don't use open scoring in the United States.

Thus, many were surprised when the cornermen of Chavez and Rubio were shown the official scores after the fourth and eighth rounds.

The plusses and minuses of open scoring are best discussed in another column but I'll provide one example: ... Say Freddie Roach, Chavez's trainer, was told after eight rounds that his fighter was leading by five points or more. Roach could then tell Chavez to run for the final four rounds to guarantee victory.

So how did this happen? Those Texas authorities again. They evidently agreed to allow limited open scoring at the request of the WBC, another horrible decision.

And, finally, there was the scoring of judge Ruben Garcia in the Donaire-Vazquez fight. Garcia's two counterparts had identical scores of 117-110 for Donaire, which reflected reality; Garcia scored it for Vazquez 115-112, one of the most indefensible scores in my two decades of covering boxing.

I can't blame the Texas authorities for that one; it's on Garcia, an experienced judge. However, we can only hope that Garcia is taken to task to determine how he arrived at such a ridiculous score and be sure it doesn't happen again.

Overall, the night was another black eye for Texas boxing. One would think that a conscientious lawmaker in that proud state would see a red flag and do something about a regulatory body that seems to struggle much more than it should. Is anyone paying attention?

One thing is certain: Boxing can do better than this. ■

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Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. (left) passed another test when he defeated capable veteran **Marco Antonio Rubio** by a unanimous decision Feb. 4 in San Antonio.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Nonito Donaire wasn't as dominating as expected but he had a successful debut as a full-fledged junior featherweight by outpointing **Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.** on the Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.-Marco Antonio Rubio undercard Feb. 4.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Gabriel Campillo (left) and **Tavoris Cloud** both believe they won their light heavyweight fight on Feb. 18 in Corpus Christi, Texas. Campillo would be disappointed with a controversial decision.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

HEAVYWEIGHTS ANYONE?

With 2012 not starting out with the super fight boxing fans have been craving for years now, I thought it would be good to discuss the division that we need so desperately in a sport that has been losing its steam lately.

Four Heavyweights can change that if they would choose to engage with one another: David Haye, Chris Arreola, Dereck Chisora and Seth Mitchell. Of course, the Klitschko brothers fighting one another would generate tons of interest, but the brothers have sworn to never face one another. Arreola vs. Haye would do extremly well in Los Angeles and would be an excellent bout. Mitchell vs. Chrisora would be in my opinion a slugfest and entertaining bout.

So with Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao not coming to terms again, should we be asking for more compelling heavyweight bouts instead of waiting for Floyd and Manny to be out of their primes when and if they finally meet in the ring? Heavyweights anyone?

Phil Muniz
Stockton, Calif.

KLITSCHKOS VS ?

I used to be a big fan of the heavyweight division. When I was a kid, I didn´t really follow any other weight classes. I almost didn´t know they existed. But that was the era of Mike Tyson and other exciting heavyweights. Today, and for many many years, it has been all Klitschkos. They´re great fighters, it´s just that they don´t have any real competition. Where are the great new American heavyweights? It´s embarrassing for the division that Wladimir´s next opponent [as of press time] is Jean-Marc Mormeck, who´s really a cruiserweight, 39 years old, and stands 5-11 (152cm). What is the point of this match-up? Making easy money and letting most of the world care less about the division than they already did? There´s only a few fighters who could stand a chance against the brothers. The better of the two is Alexander Povetkin. The other one is my countryman Robert Helenius, who might be able to give them some trouble if he recovers from his recent surgery and gets his career back up and rolling. Well, maybe the division will one day rise again. In the meantime, I´m looking forward to the thrilling match-ups in other divisions, such as Lamont Peterson vs. Amir Khan and Brandon Rios vs. Yuriorkis Gamboa.

Joni Nurminen
Finland

GETTING THEIR DUE

I applaud you for the "Most-Significant Female Boxers of All Time" article (Feb. 2012). I was familiar with only a few of the boxers mentioned. If it wasn't for the fact that women's boxing is still not given the media attention and respect it should have by now, I would have known all of the names in the article. Thank you for highlighting these women, as well as giving me something to post up in the gym where I train so the other female boxers may be inspired.

Hillari Hunter
Chicago

CHAMPION OVERLOAD

How many champions do we really need? Seventeen divisions, five organizations. That's 85 champions !!! Eventually everyone will have a belt, like the kids teams where everyone gets a trophy.

It's hard to root for anyone let alone know who's who. I long for the old days – one champion per division. Simple.

William Durkin
TinleyPark, Ill.

DISGUSTED FAN

I love the sport of boxing and always will but when I see the kind of incompetent judging as I witnessed on the Tavoris Cloud vs. Gabriel Campillo fight on Feb. 18, it sends an ache to my boxing heart. One begs the question: What fight was judge David Robertson watching? 116-110 Cloud?!! Are you kidding me, man?!!! How in the world is this kind of judging allowed in professional boxing? As the crowd clearly expressed, Campillo was robbed. Period. Robertson should not be allowed anywhere near a boxing ring – ever.

Roberto Gonzalez
Bronx, N.Y.

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Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.'s out-of-the ring issues overshadowed a solid victory over **Marco Antonio Rubio.**

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

THE WRONG KIND OF ATTENTION

By: **David Greisman**

Fat, drunk and accused of cheating. In some jurisdictions, that's grounds for divorce. In boxing this past February, those were the stories involving Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. If Chavez Jr. was seeking to step out from his famed father's shadow, then he certainly found the two best ways to make a name for himself — accomplishments and controversies.

The kid has a world title and two successful defenses, including his latest win over accomplished gatekeeper Marco Antonio Rubio.

However, few were talking about the actual fight between Chavez and Rubio, both beforehand and afterward. Rather, there were the stories that came up the day before and day of the fight: Chavez's difficulties making middleweight, his rehydrating up to a massive 181 pounds on fight night, and the revelation that he'd been arrested for allegedly driving drunk less than two weeks before the bout.

Rubio took shots from Chavez on Feb. 4 and then took shots at Chavez the day after, accusing the kid of using performance-enhancing drugs. It didn't help that the WBC (that paragon of integrity) and the Texas athletic commission (already known for occasionally questionable refereeing and judging) failed to do any sort of post-fight drug testing.

Apparently everything really is big in the Lone Star State — particularly the mistakes.

Chavez hopes to prove himself as something other than a privileged child of a superstar and a protected fighter on a promoter's roster. He wants to show that he's not just another sanctioning body darling with a world title belt he doesn't deserve, never mind those criticizing him for not yet facing the true middleweight champion, Sergio Martinez.

The Rubio win is deserving of

Miguel Cotto (right) might be the only pay-per-view attraction not named Floyd or Manny. Image: **Al Bello-Getty Images**

praise. But the more this kind of controversy surrounds him, the more likely that respect will elude him. It's not completely fair, but the road is simultaneously easier and rougher for the children of celebrities — a road that'll be easier to navigate so long as Chavez Jr. stays sober and successful.

***

You'd like to think you get what you pay for. That's not always true. You pay for whatever you can get — and you can only get what others will give. Sometimes you'll have made a wise investment and receive more than your money's worth. More often the market crashes down on you.

Promoters manipulate the business of boxing, maximizing profit and minimizing risk. Fighters step out onto the trading floor, an industry of rising and falling, one great day away from riches, one bad run away from bankruptcy.

We support the industry, paying in installments: $15 for a premium cable channel, $55 for a pay-per-view, hundreds here or thousands there for tickets. We'd like to think we always get what we pay for.

We are boxing fans, and far too often it feels like, well, we're paying for it.

***

We paid at least $60 last fall for Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Victor Ortiz and at least $55 for Manny Pacquiao's third fight with Juan Manuel Marquez. We'll do the same this May for Mayweather vs. Miguel Cotto and Pacquiao vs. Timothy Bradley in June.

The best thing about the news of Mayweather-Cotto and Pacquiao-Bradley being made official in February was that it gave us at least three more months before we would have to hear yet again about Mayweather-Pacquiao — starting, as usual, with whether that fight will happen next, and then ending, as usual, with why it once again will not.

They make millions and millions despite this, the fighters and promoters and networks getting richer no matter who Mayweather

and Pacquiao face — like patrons of a Broadway production who pay full price, only to find out that tonight the starring roles are being played by understudies.

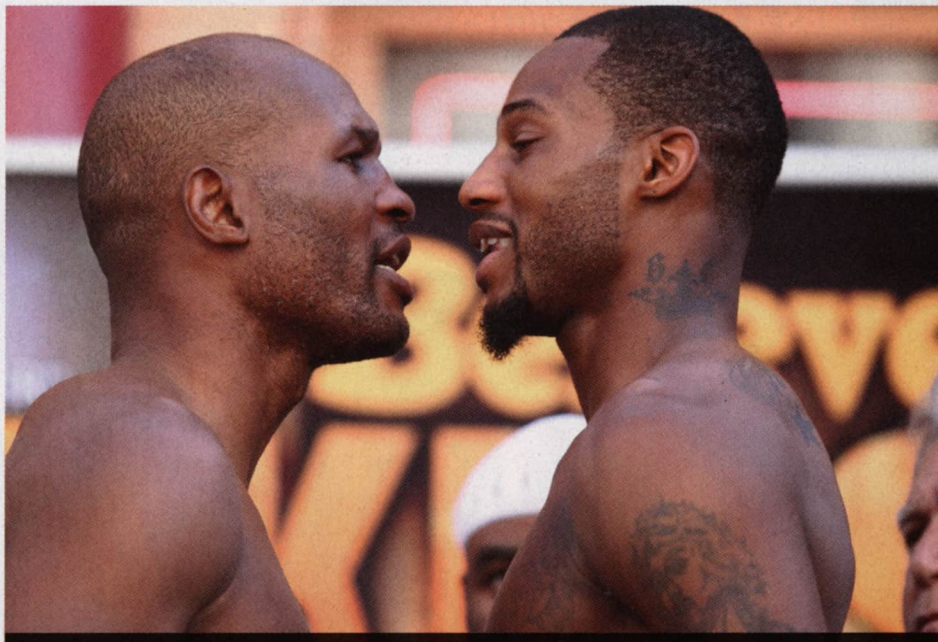
Cotto remains a star, perhaps the only pay-per-view attraction in the United States not named Manny or Floyd. His stature will make Mayweather-Cotto an event, which is what helps make a pay-per-view successful. It's less certain whether he'll be able to make it a good fight, which is what helps make a pay-per-view enjoyable.

Boxing audiences can be broken into groups: the fans of each fighter who will tune in, no matter what; the fans of boxing, in general, who will do the same; and the casual viewers who tend to be drawn in by the headliner, who will show up for a Tyson or De La Hoya fight the same way movie viewers will head to the theater for a Tom Cruise or Will Smith film.

Blockbusters don't need to be high quality so long as they send the audience home happy, so long as the good guys win, live to fight another day and return soon in a sequel. Meanwhile, the best fight of the past decade — Diego Corrales vs. Jose Luis Castillo — bombed when its rematch was put on pay-per-view.

Pacquiao vs. Bradley, meanwhile, carries less star power from its B-side (no pun intended). Bradley, while talented and respected in boxing circles, remains a distant third behind Evander Holyfield and Bernard Hopkins when it comes to the public awareness of bald fighters who tend to head butt.

His speed and unorthodox style could pose problems for Pacquiao, however. Or there could be a clash of heads that ends their fight early and sends fans home unhappy. The fighters and promoters will still make millions. And we'll still shell out money for the next installment.



At least **Bernard Hopkins-Chad Dawson II** is on HBO and not pay-per-view television. Image: **Tom Hogan-Hoganphotos**

We pay for whatever we can get — one more reason why the promoters and fighters don't have to give us Mayweather vs. Pacquiao.

***

Bernard Hopkins' famed frugality means he doesn't need our help padding his retirement account — but he is getting our assistance nonetheless.

We paid our HBO subscription fee for October, financing Hopkins' first fight with Chad Dawson. When that bout was flipped over onto pay-per-view, those few who tuned in paid twice for it. And then, when the main event ended in a two-round travesty, they figuratively paid for their decision — or their addiction.

Now they'll be paying for it once more, an April rematch fortunately being shown for "free" on HBO, though in reality a pairing that takes money and airtime away from those who might put on better fights.

This is the gamble that subscribers make with their cable bills. If only network executives had Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s betting ability, rather than his matchmaking ability.

Last October brought us Hopkins-Dawson I and Nonito Donaire vs. Omar Narvaez, but then just weeks later in November there was James Kirkland's war with Alfredo Angulo. One day in April 2011 brought the aesthetically displeasing Amir Khan vs. Paul McCloskey and THE RING's "Fight of the Year" candidate between Victor Ortiz and Andre Berto.

Boxing broadcasting, like the fundamental nature of the sport itself, is hit and miss. Bernard Hopkins is said to do good ratings. If a significant number of people tune in for his rematch with Dawson after seeing the first bout, then perhaps it's the viewers who have taken too many shots to the head. And if it turns out to be another stinker, then, well, HBO and boxing fans will have gotten what they paid for. ■

JABS & STRAIGHT WRITES

By **Thomas Hauser**

Jake LaMotta (right) became known as "Raging Bull" after the film of that name, starring **Robert De Niro.** Image: **THE RING**

QUICK QUIZ

1. Eight men who later held the world heavyweight championship won Olympic gold medals. Who were they?

2. Jake LaMotta became known as "The Raging Bull" after a book and movie appeared with that title. What was his nickname during his ring career?

3. Angelo Dundee was Muhammad Ali's third professional trainer. Who were the first two?

Don Turner's greatest moment outside of boxing took place in the water. Image: **THE RING**

TRAINER DON TURNER REMEMBERS HIS GREATEST MOMENT IN SPORTS ... OUTSIDE OF BOXING

"I'd say it was winning the 50-yard freestyle championship in junior high school intramurals when I was in seventh grade. This was in Cincinnati. I'd learned to swim in a place behind our house called Chemical Creek. When I got good, I started going to the Lincoln Center, where they had three pools. In practice there, we had to flutter kick a mile every day. Anyway, they had the intramurals and I won by a body. I felt pretty good that day. I didn't feel like I did when Evander Holyfield knocked out Mike Tyson or when Larry Holmes beat Ray Mercer. Those were probably my two greatest moments in sports. But as far as moments outside of boxing are concerned, it was that time in seventh grade."

TRAGIC TALE

Billy Miske was born in 1894 and fought professionally from 1913 through 1923. His life in and out of the ring is painstakingly recreated by Clay Moyle in *Billy Miske: The St. Paul Thunderbolt* (Win by KO Publications).

Miske fought in an era when bouts that went the distance were often ruled "no decision" and fans relied on newspaper reports (known as "newspaper decisions") to determine who had "won." Factoring newspaper decisions into the equation, Miske had 73 career victories against 14 losses and 16 draws. The six best fighters he faced and his record against them were Jack Dempsey (0-2-1), Harry Greb (0-2-1), Tommy Gibbons (1-3-1), Battling Levinsky (2-2), Jack Dillon (4-1), and Kid Norfolk (0-2). In other words, Miske was good but a shade below the best of his era.

That said, one has to wonder how much a kidney disease diagnosed in 1919 affected his performance in some of those encounters.

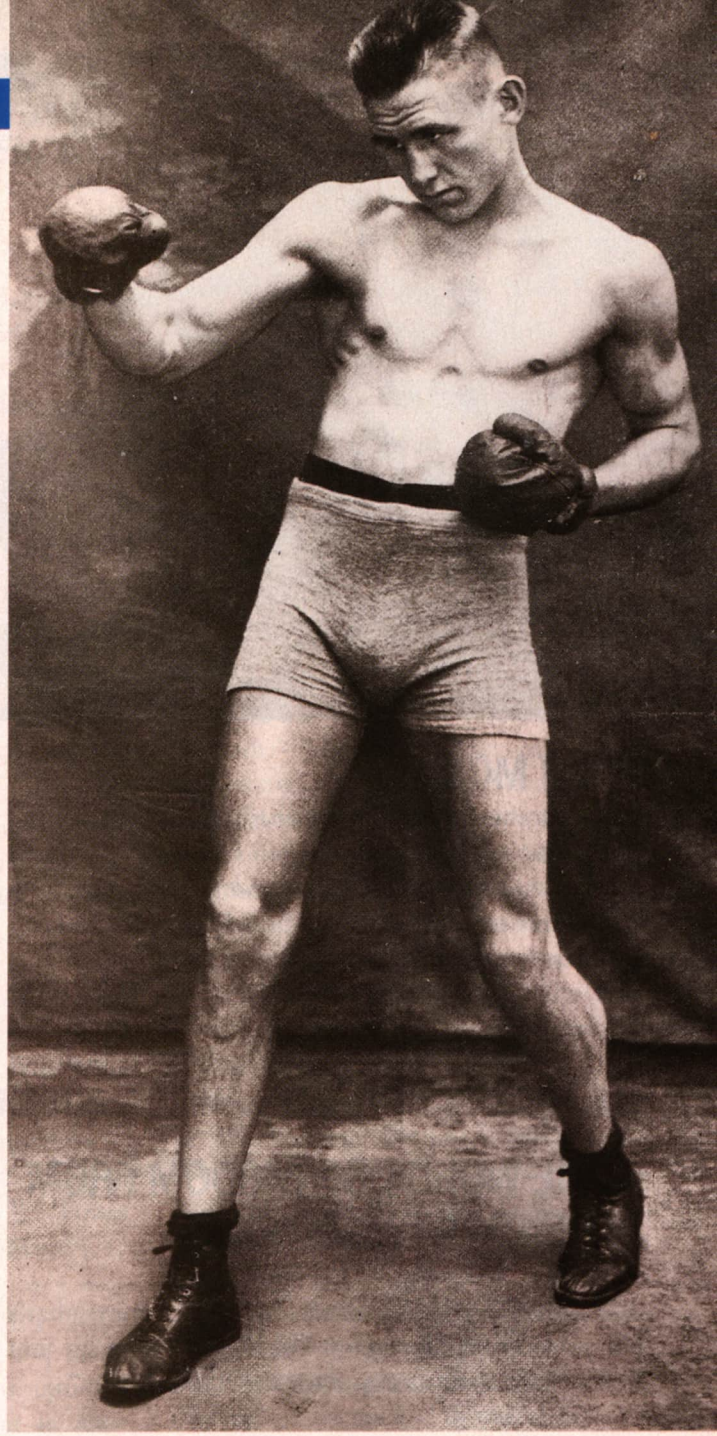
Miske is best known for his three fights against Jack Dempsey. The first two culminated in "newspaper" verdicts and occurred before Dempsey became champion. A still-raw Dempsey came close to knocking Miske out in the seventh round of their initial bout but was forced to settle for a draw. The Manassa Mauler later conceded, "At the start of the fight, and I think in most of the rounds, Miske outboxed me."

In their second confrontation, Dempsey prevailed on a six-round decision but admitted afterward, "I was hitting harder, but he was landing so often that my punches were weakened."

Dempsey-Miske III was contested on Sept. 6, 1920, 14 months after Miske was diagnosed with the kidney disease that would kill him, Bright's Disease. Miske was fighting because he needed the money to provide for his wife and two young children.

It was Dempsey's first title defense. Years later, the champion acknowledged, "Miske was through as a serious contender. I knew full well that he would give me no real fight. But I was hearing stories from other fighters that he was broke and needed the money badly."

Three undercard bouts preceded the main event. Two of them featured Harry Greb and Sam Langford. That's quite an undercard. Adding to the historical import of the moment, updated telegraph reports of Dempsey-Miske III were broadcast live on radio.



▶ Billy Miske is one of boxing's tragic stories.
Image: **THE RING**

In Round 2, a vicious body shot put Miske on the canvas for the first time in his ring career. He was counted out in the third round.

Still in need of money, Miske fought for three more years. His final fight, a maudlin affair, was a fourth-round knockout of Bill Brennan on Nov. 7, 1923. He died on Jan. 1, 1924.

Kudos to Clay Moyle for illuminating a piece of boxing history. ■

WOW MOMENTS

David Drebin is an accomplished photographer with an eye for celebrity and sex that has enabled him to cross over seamlessly between fine art, trade publishing and advertising. Recently, he turned his eye to boxing, and more specifically, to Manny Pacquiao.

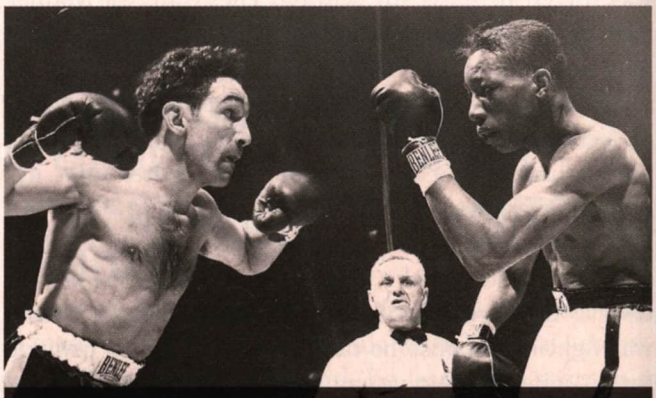
Drebin had access to Pacquiao in the Wild Card Boxing Club and also on fight night. The result is a book with some wonderful photographs but text and a layout that don't do them justice. The best way to appreciate Drebin's art is to ignore the way the photos have been packaged and view them one at a time. Do that and there are some "wow" moments.

Manny Pacquiao (C.J. Oyster Publishing) is available at mannyboxingbook.com in softcover for $14.95. A larger-format hardcover edition can be purchased for $39.95.

SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FROM LEGENDARY FIGHTERS

JOE GANS: "If you hit a man in a place that hurts, that's the place to hit him again. You only have to hit him half as hard there as any place else to finish him."

WILLIE PEP (ON HIS VICTORY OVER SANDY SADDLER): "When I stepped on his toes, he said, 'Ouch?' So I stepped on his toes all night."

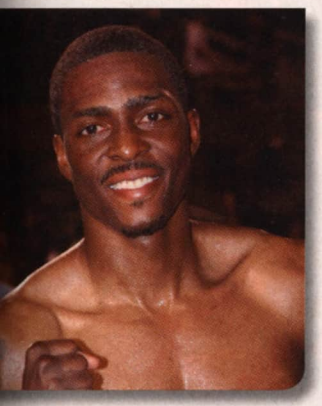


Willie Pep (left, against **Sandy Saddler**) was no dummy. Image: **THE RING**

QUIZ ANSWERS: **1.** Floyd Patterson, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, George Foreman, Leon Spinks, Michael Spinks, Lennox Lewis and Wladimir Klitschko won Olympic gold medals before becoming heavyweight champion of the world. This list doesn't include Alexander Povetkin, who won Olympic gold and currently enjoys the benefits of a faux WBA belt. **2.** LaMotta was first known in ring circles as The Bronx Bull. **3.** Cassius Clay, as he was then known, trained in Louisville with Fred Stoner for his first professional fight. Then he journeyed to California and trained for seven weeks with Archie Moore.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at **thauser@rcn.com**. His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

PLAYLIST THE BANDS AND SINGERS BOXING PEOPLE ARE LISTENING TO.



RONALD HEARNS

Kirk Franklin ("Hello Fear"), Marvin Sapp ("Never Would Have Made It"), Ernest Pugh ("I Need Your Glory"), Vashawn Mitchell ("Nobody Greater"), William McDowell ("I Give Myself Away")

"I'm a man of God, so I listen to Gospel music. I love Kirk Franklin. It's basically pouring out your heart to God, and telling him to use me any way that he sees possible. Don't allow me to be in my own flesh. I want him to order my footsteps, basically. I'm at peace when I listen to this music and I go into the ring. I don't know what my fate is. Only God knows. So I just go out there and I perform, because I know that God has my back."

TOMMY RAINONE

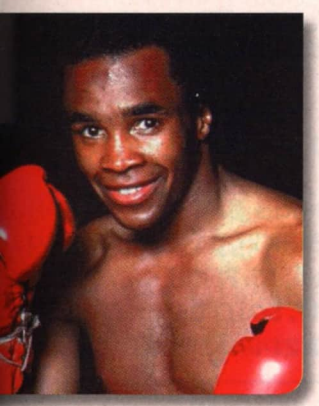
Whitesnake ("Here I Go"), Metallica ("Die Die My Darling"), "The Karate Kid" Soundtrack ("You're the Best Around"), Korn ("Here 2 Stay": "Came out to that at the Blue Horizon. Felt so good coming into the ring"), The Offspring ("Staring at The Sun")

"Well, I like older stuff too, believe it or not. "Layla" is a song that gets me fired up. Love the riffs and the solos. And Black Sabbath – "Iron Man." I've come out to that one once, too. Rolling Stones – "Just a Shot Away." Great song to work out to. And, of course, "It's Raining Men" (The Weather Girls) and "I'll Tumble 4 Ya" (Culture Club) – Gotta come out to those just for the fan reaction, as well as "Why Can't We Be Friends" (War).

MARK 'TOO SHARP' JOHNSON

Rare Essence ("Body Snatchers"), Mystikal ("The Man Right 'Chea"), Michael Jackson ("Beat It"), James Brown ("Papa Don't Take No Mess")

"First of all, the James Brown, "Papa Don't Take No Mess," that just made me feel like when I was going into the ring, it doesn't matter who it is, they were my kids and I was the father. I was letting them know that I wasn't going to take no mess. The local Go-Go band, Rare Essence, they had a song, "Body Snatchers," that made me say that I was going for the body. And then after the fight, Mystikal, that let me know that "The Man Right 'Chea." You know? I'm the man. With Michael Jackson, being the first African American and in everything that I did, I always had to beat the odds."



SUGAR RAY LEONARD

Michael Jackson ("Leave Me Alone"), Bobby Brown ("My Prerogative")

"After those two, I'm totally clueless. I loved "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now," but that was Larry Holmes. I was going to take that from him, but Larry had it for so long. That's like all that he used. Those other ones, though, those were the two that stand out in my mind that I used."

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Joe Calzaghe (right, against Roy Jones Jr.) is second only to Rocky Marciano when it comes to perfect records. Image: Ed Mulholland-Fightwireimages

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST.

This week, inspired by Floyd Mayweather Jr. (42-0): Fighters who retired undefeated. (In order of number of victories.)

1. **JIMMY BARRY** 59-0-10
2. **RICARDO LOPEZ** 51-0-1
3. **ROCKY MARCIANO** 49-0
4. **EDSON PEDRO NASCIMENTO** 47-0-1
5. **JOE CALZAGHE** 46-0
6. **SAMSON DUTCH BOY GYM** 43-0
7. **AGUSTIN SENIN** 42-0-1
8. **SVEN OTTKE** 34-0
9. **JACK MCAULIFFE** 34-0-7
10. **MICHAEL LOEWE** 28-0

TEN MORE: **11. EDWIN VALERO** 27-0; **12. LASZLO PAPP** 27-0-2; **13. TERRY MARSH** 26-0-1; **14. GEORGE KANDELAKI** 24-0; **15. PICHIT SITBANGPRACHAN** 24-0; **16. HARRY SIMON** 25-0; **17. SCOTT DALEY** 24-0; **18. JEMAL HINTON** 22-0; **19. MZUKISI SKWEYIYA** 21-0-1; **20T. IKE IBEABUCHI** 20-0; **20T. GURCHARAN SINGH** 20-0.

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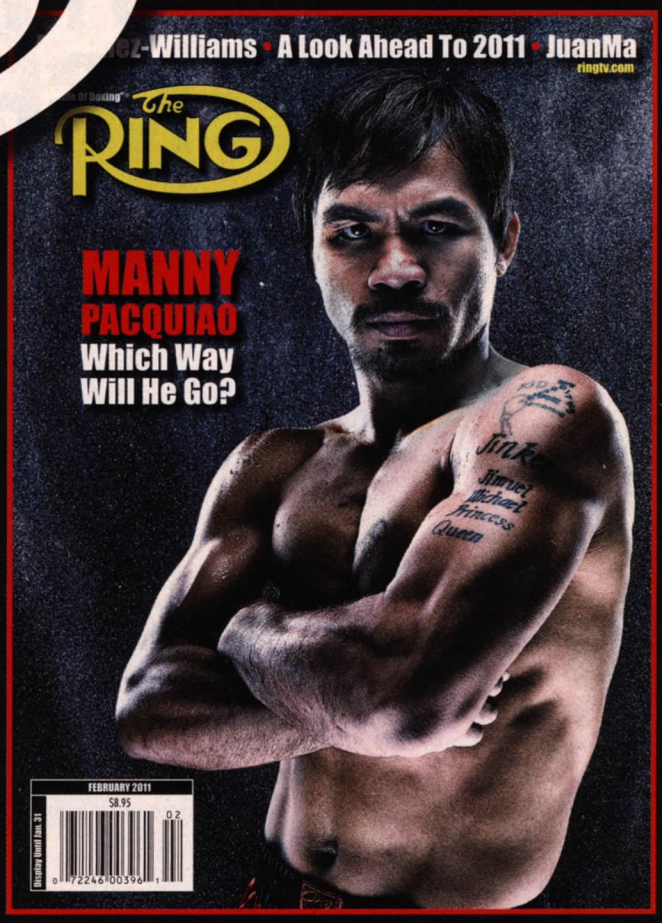

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HEAVY DUTY CHALLENGE

HEAVYWEIGHTS MUST BE PARTICULARLY MOTIVATED FOR LACK OF A WEIGHT LIMIT

By **T.K. Stewart**

Heavyweights are missing one powerful incentive to be as fit as possible: a weight limit. Training like a man possessed on top of a strict diet is a bit less attractive when one really doesn't have to look down at a number on the scale. As a result, the division has sometimes produced portly practitioners.

"Two Ton" Tony Galento was perhaps the most well-known of the pudgy types. But former 1980s heavyweight belt holders such as Tim Witherspoon, Greg Page and Tony Tubbs all made names for themselves while sporting physiques that could best be described as corpulent. More recently David Tua, James Toney and Chris Arreola have been met with criticism, as well as lukewarm results, for being roly-poly.

While it is not a prerequisite or even a necessity to have a beach body to be successful as a heavyweight, it certainly helps to maintain discipline at the dinner table whether or not one is preparing for an upcoming fight. They are, after all, athletes, for whom health is always considered a good thing. Consequently, those who reside north of the 200-pound mark today need to possess uncommon motivation in order to achieve their goals.

"I try to make sure my eating is as clean as possible," says former WBA titleholder Dave Haye. "I won't eat any junk whatsoever. Everything that goes in my mouth is fresh, it's organic and it's clean. I feel to get the best out of yourself you have to put the best into yourself so I make sure everything is 'spot on' nutrition-wise. That way I can give myself the best opportunity and the best chance. A lot of heavyweights just go out there and eat junk food. They think just because they're a heavyweight and don't have to make a weight they shouldn't come in prime condition.

"I don't believe in that ethos one bit. I believe an athlete is an athlete and to get the best out of yourself you've got to put the best into yourself. I don't even get on the scales before a fight. I could be 15½ stone (217 pounds), I could be 15 (210), I could be 16 (224) – I don't know – it doesn't bother me. As long as I'm in optimal condition I know the fight is going to go great."

While not every heavyweight in today's RING Top 10 ratings has a set of washboard abs or has visible veins coursing through their upper body, they all pay close attention to their diet and their waistlines.

While some are just born big, others, such as Evander Holyfield and Tomasz Adamek, have bulked up to compete with the big boys. Their primary goals were the larger purses and greater adulation available to those in the land of the heavyweights.

Adamek has made the leap all the way from 175 pounds and his trainer explained some of how that was accomplished.

"If you look at Tomasz, his bone structure, his wrists are very thick," says Roger Bloodworth. "He's got very thick legs. He's not a big heavyweight, he's not 260 pounds, but he's not a fat heavyweight either. When you move up in weight like he has, it takes your body a certain period of time to adjust to the new weight. At 220, he has to develop a little more muscle, strength and stamina to compete at that weight, whereas when he was only at 200 or 175 he didn't have to have that much muscle."

Perhaps no recent heavyweight has been more criticized and derided for his physique than Arreola. While he has made great strides in the past year to bring down his fighting weight by 30 pounds, it wasn't until he lost bouts to Vitali Klitschko and Adamek that Arreola himself realized he needed to get serious about his nutrition and his training habits. Arreola was never one to worry about the scales, but he now understands that he must pay strict attention to his weight to achieve his goal of winning a title.

When asked what he has done to transform his body and quite possibly his future, the no nonsense Arreola was quick with a response.

"I actually train now." he said with a chuckle. "It's training plain and simple and when I'm supposed to be at the gym, I'm at the gym. And now, pretty much everything I eat I'm the one that cooks it. I don't eat late anymore and I don't eat burritos at 2 o'clock in the morning like I used to. I don't drink alcohol, beer, like I used to. I still drink, I'm human, but not like I used to. I learned, and my trainer Henry (Ramirez) will tell you this, too, my best weight is 235-240.

"There's no need for me to be lighter than that or to cut weight. I eat my chicken, my fruits, my vegetables, my rice and if I do that I feel great." ■

David Haye is extremely disciplined when it comes to his diet. "I won't eat any junk whatsoever," he said.

Image: **AFP / Getty Images**

Gene (left) and **Don Fullmer** were one of the better brother combinations in boxing history. Image: **THE RING**

A MONTH OF GOODBYES

By **Brian Harty**

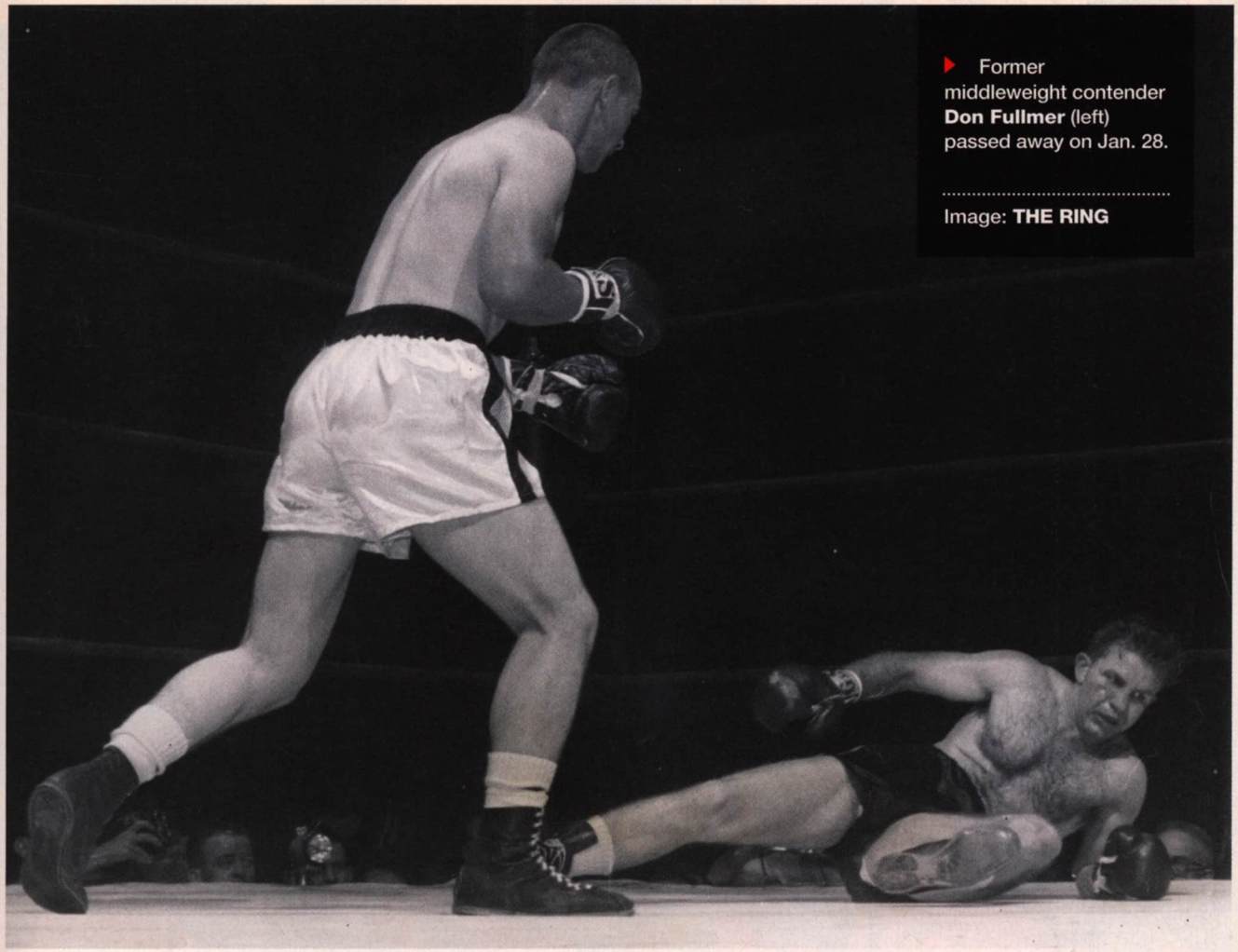
It was a month of heavy losses for boxing. In addition to Angelo Dundee and Goody Petronelli, to whom articles have been dedicated in this issue, the sport also said goodbye to referee Wayne Kelly and former middleweight contender Don Fullmer. Kelly was the third man for such fights as Arturo Gatti's sixth-round knockout of Wilson Rodriguez, Wladimir Klitschko's unification win over Sultan Ibragimov and Andrew Golota's crotch-punishing DQ against Riddick Bowe, after which a riot erupted when a member of Bowe's entourage attacked Golota with a walkie-talkie. Kelly, who received a Purple Heart in Vietnam, rode out the mayhem at center ring.

Fullmer's father went by "Tuff" and his older brother's name was decided by the winner of the Gene Tunney-Jack Dempsey fight in 1926, so being a professional fighter pretty much came naturally. To indulge his softer side, he also worked as a bricklayer. After going 65-0 as an amateur, Fullmer turned pro and tangled with future hall of famers Dick Tiger, Jose Torres and Emile Griffith, as well as Joey Archer and eventual heavyweight champion Jimmy Ellis. His defining moment happened in a 1968 title fight against Nino Benvenuti: Fullmer dropped the Italian in the seventh but eventually lost a 15-round decision. It was the closest he ever came to being a recognized world champion, but Fullmer's status as a much-loved icon in West Jordan, Utah, where he went on to work as a fireman and ran a gym with his brothers, would have been scarcely affected if Benvenuti had stayed down. ...

According to Lennox Lewis, history has also claimed another icon of boxing: the heavyweight division. The former undisputed world champion told the UK's *Daily Mirror* that he is "bored of waiting" for the next version of himself to arrive, and that whiny toe-stubbers like David Haye disgust him. "It makes me sad when the biggest match-up out there is Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, a pair of lightweights," said Lewis, adding that he'd be willing to train Haye for a fight against Vitali Klitschko. ...

Meanwhile, *welterweight* Pacquiao, on ABS-CBN News in the Philippines, described waking up crying from a dream in which he was walking through a forest when a voice emanating from a bright light asked him, "Son, why are you going away from me?" Since then, Pacquiao reports that his appetite for "doing evil" has left him -- even going so far as to give away his collection of fighting cocks -- and that the experience has brought him back to his faith. The Catholic church took notice, and approached Pacman with the idea of becoming a "bible ambassador," and, as an example of what that means, pointed to Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow (who, incidently, was born in Manilla). ...

Light heavyweight prospect Mike Lee signed on to be a spokesman for something more worldly. As a student boxer at Notre Dame, Lee



Former middleweight contender **Don Fullmer** (left) passed away on Jan. 28.

Image: **THE RING**

made a habit of devouring a Subway turkey sandwich right after his weigh-ins. Somehow this got back to the franchise's ad people and they decided to include him in a TV campaign that features famous athletes. ...

Another famous athlete, Mike Tyson, was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame for his role as a "special enforcer" leading up to WrestleMania XIV. His confrontation with Stone Cold Steve Austin in 1998 is regarded as a critical moment in the organization's Attitude Era, which saw family-friendly storylines abandoned in favor of conflicts that were a bit more, well ... Tyson-esque. ...

Violence of an unchoreographed sort broke out in Argentina when Filipino junior flyweight Johnriel Casimero had the nerve to beat the hometown hero, IBF titleholder Luis Lazarte, with a 10th-round TKO. Many in the crowd expressed themselves by throwing chairs, while others jumped into the ring and joined Team Lazarte in attacking Casimero, who, still wearing his gloves, frantically looked for some way to escape. He was hidden under the ring by the referee but received multiple concussions. A member of his team sustained broken ribs. The IBF banned Lazarte for life when it was discovered that, following a warning in the sixth round for repeatedly hitting behind the head, the fighter removed his mouthpiece and said directly to the referee, "Do you want to leave here alive?" ...

But if that makes boxing in Argentina sound like an act of bravery, consider this: 17-year-old boxer Sadaf Rahimi will be the only female athlete representing Afghanistan at the 2012 Olympics in London. Both her father and her coach have received threats, and Rahimi and her two sisters (who also box) must be escorted to and from the gym for their own safety. The "gym" where they and about 20 others train is a makeshift space below Ghazi Stadium in Kabul, which was formerly used by the Taliban to stage public executions, including stonings of women accused of adultery. "I will try to show that an Afghan girl can enter the ring and achieve a position for Afghanistan," the remarkably understated Rahimi told the Associated Press. Also perfectly acceptable would have been something along the lines of "HOLY #@!%!, GET ME OUT OF HERE!" ■

CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ

ASHLEY FERRARA

Height: 5-foot-5 **Weight:** 124 pounds
Measurements: 34DD-26-36
Stance: Orthodox
Reach: 24 inches
Favorite Boxer: Larry Holmes
Current Location: Norman, Okla.
Where you've seen her: HBO, Showtime, ESPN2 Friday Night Fights, USA Boxing National Championships
Booking Info:
www.facebook.com/ashleyferraramodel;
Twitter: @AshleyFerrara;
ashleyferraramodel@gmail.com

CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ

THE RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH BY: **HEATHER SHANHOLTZ** | IMAGES: **B. ELLIS**

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FIGHTER OF THE MONTH:

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ

Yoan Pablo Hernandez had a lot to prove in his second meeting with Steve Cunningham.

In the first, the IBF cruiserweight titleholder escaped with a sixth-round technical-decision victory in the biggest fight of his career but not everyone was convinced after the fight was stopped because of a cut above Hernandez's left eye.

In the rematch, on Feb. 4 in Frankfurt, Germany, the talented Cuban had to demonstrate that he could do something he'd never done – beat an elite opponent legitimately.

And that's exactly what Hernandez did, putting Cunningham down twice in the fourth round and winning a unanimous decision to retain his title and capture the vacant RING cruiserweight championship in a terrific fight.

Thus, Hernandez (26-1, 13 knockouts) completes a long journey.

The lean, 6-foot-4 southpaw competed as a light heavyweight in the 2004 Olympics for his native country only to be eliminated in the second round. After defecting and relocating to Germany, he started his career 14-0 but was stopped by Wayne Braithwaite in fight 15.

He demonstrated his resilience by regrouping and beating Cunningham to win the IBF title only to have his victory questioned. And finally, six-plus years after turning pro, he is the king of his division.

Hernandez is only 27. He could be there for a while.

Yoan Pablo Hernandez appears to be extremely proud of the RING belt he won by beating Steve Cunningham on Feb. 4. Image: **Wende**

RATINGS ANALYSIS

FOR PERIOD ENDING FEB. 20, 2012

POUND FOR POUND:
No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS:
Eddie Chambers (No. 4 last month) was removed because he hasn't fought since he outpointed Derric Rossy on Feb. 11 of last year, more than a year ago. That lifted everyone from No. 5 downward up one space, leaving room for British heavyweight Tyson Fury to enter the ratings at No. 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Yoan Pablo Hernandez (No. 1 last month) became THE RING's cruiserweight champion by defeating Steve Cunningham (No. 2 last month) via unanimous decision in Frankfurt, Germany. Hernandez is the first to hold the position since Tomasz Adamek gave up the belt early in 2009 to campaign at heavyweight. Cunningham remained at No. 2, while Krzysztof Wlodarczyk (No. 3 last month) leapfrogged to No. 1. Everyone else moved up one notch, and Alexander Alekseev entered the ratings at No. 10.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS:
Gabriel Campillo (No. 9 last month) outworked Tavoris Cloud but got screwed in the decision (again). For his efforts, he rose to No. 7, pushing former opponents Beibut Shumenov (No. 7 last month) and Karo Murat (No. 8 last month) down one notch each. Cloud (No. 2 last month) turned in a sub-par perfomance and dropped one space, swapping places with Chad Dawson (No. 3 last month).

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
Paul Williams (unrated last month) gave an impressive performance in his shutout decision over Nobuhiro Ishida. He entered the ratings at No. 7, pushing Delvin Rodriguez (No. 10 last month) off the list.

WELTERWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS:
No change.

LIGHTWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS:
No change.

FEATHERWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS:
Nonito Donaire (unrated last month) had a successful debut at 122 pounds, defeating Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. (No. 8 last month) by a split decision. Donaire entered at No. 3, pushing everyone from No.3 to No. 7 down one notch, while Vazquez fell to No. 10. Victor Terrazas (No. 10 last month) dropped out.

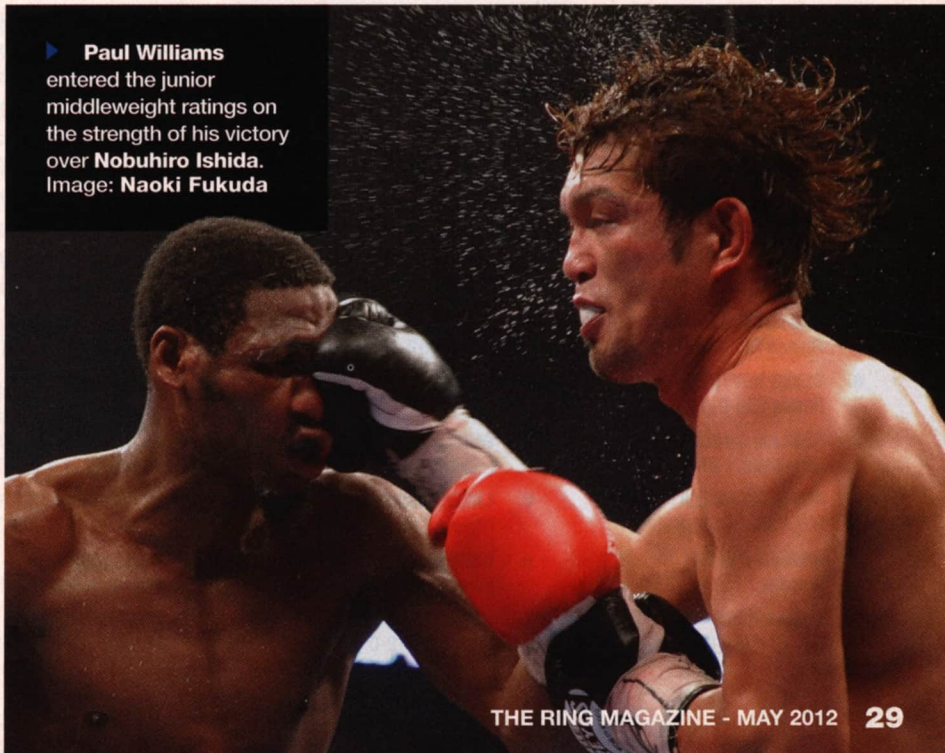
BANTAMWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS:
Juan Carlos Sanchez Jr. (unrated last month) outpointed Rodriguo Guerrero (No. 10 last month) to win the IBF title. Sanchez took Guerrero's position in the ratings.

FLYWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS:
Johnriel Casimero stopped Luis Lazarte (No. 4 last month) in 10 rounds in Lazarte's native Buenos Aires, which sparked an ugly riot. Afterward, Lazarte, 40, was banned for life by the IBF and said he plans to retire. He left the ratings, lifting everyone from No. 5 to No. 10 up one position, while Casimero entered at No. 10. Then, Gilberto Keb Baas (No. 1 last month) was stopped in five rounds by Mario Rodriguez – Keb Baas' second consecutive KO loss. He plummeted to No. 10, pushing everyone else up a notch.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.



Paul Williams entered the junior middleweight ratings on the strength of his victory over **Nobuhiro Ishida**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Dereck Chisora showed no class before and after his loss to **Vitali Klitschko,** slapping Klitschko after the weigh-in (pictured), spitting water in **Wladimir Klitschko's** face and playing a role in a brawl involving **David Haye.** Image: **Christof Stache-AFP-Getty Images**

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C	**WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**	Ukraine | 56-3-0 (49 KOs)
1.	**VITALI KLITSCHKO**	Ukraine | 44-2-0 (40 KOs)
2.	**ALEXANDER POVETKIN**	Russia | 23-0-0 (16 KOs)
3.	**TOMASZ ADAMEK**	Poland | 44-2-0 (28 KOs)
4.	**ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**	Ukraine | 32-1-0 (21 KOs)
5.	**ROBERT HELENIUS**	Finland | 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
6.	**DENIS BOYTSOV**	Russia | 30-0-0 (25 KOs)
7.	**RUSLAN CHAGAEV**	Uzbekistan | 28-2-1 (17 KOs)
8.	**CHRIS ARREOLA**	U.S. | 35-2-0 (30 KOs)
9.	**KUBRAT PULEV**	Bulgaria | 15-0-0 (7 KOs)
10.	**TYSON FURY**	U.K. | 17-0-0 (12 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**	Cuba | 26-1-0 (13 KOs)
1.	**KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**	Poland | 46-2-1 (33 KOs)
2.	**STEVE CUNNINGHAM**	U.S. | 24-4-0 | (12 KOs)
3.	**DENIS LEBEDEV**	Russia | 23-1-0 (17 KOs)
4.	**ANTONIO TARVER**	U.S. | 29-6-0 (20 KOs)
5.	**GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**	Italy | 29-3-1 (12 KOs)
6.	**OLA AFOLABI**	U.K. | 18-2-3 (8 KOs)
7.	**GUILLERMO JONES**	Panama | 38-3-2 (30 KOs)
8.	**LATEEF KAYODE**	Nigeria | 18-0-0 (14 KOs)
9.	**MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**	Poland | 25-0-0 (19 KOs)
10.	**ALEXANDER ALEKSEEV**	Russia | 23-2-0 (20 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**BERNARD HOPKINS**	U.S. | 52-6-2 (32 KOs)
1.	**JEAN PASCAL**	Canada | 26-2-1 (16 KOs)
2.	**CHAD DAWSON**	U.S. | 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
3.	**TAVORIS CLOUD**	U.S. | 24-0-0 (19 KOs)
4.	**NATHAN CLEVERLY**	U.K. | 23-0-0 (11 KOs)
5.	**ADRIAN DIACONU**	Romania | 27-3-0 (15 KOs)
6.	**ZSOLT ERDEI**	Hungary | 33-0-0 (18 KOs)
7.	**GABRIEL CAMPILLO**	Spain | 21-4-1 (8 KOs)
8.	**BEIBUT SHUMENOV**	Kazakhstan | 12-1-0 (8 KOs)
9.	**KARO MURAT**	Germany | 24-1-1 (14 KOs)
10.	**ISMAYL SILLAKH**	Ukraine | 17-0-0 (13 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C	**ANDRE WARD**	U.S. | 25-0-0 (13 KOs)
1.	**LUCIAN BUTE**	Romania | 30-0-0 (24 KOs)
2.	**MIKKEL KESSLER**	Denmark | 44-2-0 (33 KOs)
3.	**CARL FROCH**	U.K. | 28-2-0 (20 KOs)
4.	**ROBERT STIEGLITZ**	Russia | 41-2-0 (23 KOs)
5.	**SAKIO BIKA**	Cameroon | 29-5-2 (20 KOs)
6.	**THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**	South Africa | 17-0-1 (12 KOs)
7.	**GEORGE GROVES**	U.K. | 14-0-0 (11 KOs)
8.	**GLEN JOHNSON**	Jamaica | 51-15-2 (35 KOs)
9.	**ANDRE DIRRELL**	U.S. | 20-1-0 (14 KOs)
10.	**ARTHUR ABRAHAM**	Armenia | 33-3-0 (27 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 48-2-2 (27 KOs)

1. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia | 26-1-0 (15 KOs)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany | 36-2-2 (15 KOs)
3. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
U.K. | 28-3-0 (19 KOs)
4. **GRZEGORZ PROKSA**
Poland | 26-0-0 (19 KOs)
5. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**
Mexico | 45-0-1 (31 KOs)
6. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany | 30-1-0 (10 KOs)
7. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia | 19-0-0 (15 KOs)
8. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France | 26-0-0 (17 KOs)
9. **MARTIN MURRAY**
U.K. | 23-0-1 (10 KOs)
10. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
Kazakhstan | 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico | 37-2-0 (30 KOs)
2. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 39-0-1 (29 KOs)
3. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
U.S. | 32-0-0 (20 KOs)
4. **ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba | 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
5. **CARLOS MOLINA**
Mexico | 19-4-2 (6 KOs)
6. **JAMES KIRKLAND**
U.S. | 30-1-0 (27 KOs)
7. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
U.S. | 41-2-0 (27 KOs)
8. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico | 20-2-0 (17 KOs)
9. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
U.S. | 31-4-0 (18 KOs)
10. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
Ukraine | 37-1-0 (23 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 54-3-2 (38 KOs)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 42-0-0 (26 KOs)
3. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
U.S. | 29-3-2 (22 KOs)
4. **ANDRE BERTO**
U.S. | 28-1-0 (22 KOs)
5. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
Ukraine | 32-0-0 (21 KOs)
6. **KELL BROOK**
U.K. | 26-0-0 (18 KOs)
7. **MIKE JONES**
U.S. | 26-0-0 (19 KOs)
8. **JAN ZAVECK**
Slovenia | 31-2-0 (18 KOs)
9. **SELCUK AYDIN**
Turkey | 23-0-0 (17 KOs)
10. **SHANE MOSLEY**
U.S. | 46-7-1 (39 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 28-0-0 (12 KOs)
2. **LAMONT PETERSON**
U.S. | 30-1-1 (15 KOs)
3. **AMIR KHAN**
U.K. | 26-2-0 (18 KOs)
4. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
Argentina | 30-2-0 (28 KOs)
5. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico | 52-7-0 (36 KOs)
6. **ZAB JUDAH**
U.S. | 41-7-0 (28 KOs)
7. **DANNY GARCIA**
U.S. | 22-0-0 (14 KOs)
8. **MIKE ALVARADO**
U.S. | 32-0-0 (23 KOs)
9. **VERNON PARIS**
U.S. | 26-0-0 (15 KOs)
10. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
Mexico | 57-7-2 (34 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 53-6-1 (39 KOs)

1. **BRANDON RIOS**
U.S. | 29-0-1 (22 KOs)
2. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
U.S. | 29-1-1 (18 KOs)
3. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
Mexico | 26-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico | 30-3-0 (13 KOs)
5. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
U.K. | 33-1-0 (24 KOs)
6. **PAULUS MOSES**
Namibia | 28-1-0 (19 KOs)
7. **RICKY BURNS**
U.K. | 33-2-0 (9 KOs)
8. **JOHN MURRAY**
U.K. | 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
9. **JOHN MOLINA**
U.S. | 23-1-0 (19 KOs)
10. **RICHARD ABRIL**
Cuba | 17-2-1 (8 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
Japan | 18-0-0 (15 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
Mexico | 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
3. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico | 25-1-1 (16 KOs)
4. **TAKAHIRO AO**
Japan | 22-2-1 (10 KOs)
5. **ADRIEN BRONER**
U.S. | 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
6. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
U.S. | 21-0-0 (7 KOs)
7. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
Dom. Republic | 19-2-0 (10 KOs)
8. **JORGE SOLIS**
Mexico | 40-4-2 (29 KOs)
9. **ELOY PEREZ**
U.S. | 23-0-2 (7 KOs)
10. **JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
Mexico | 28-1-0 (19 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba | 21-0-0 (16 KOs)
2. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia | 46-0-2 (22 KOs)
3. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
Mexico | 37-11-2 (25 KOs)
4. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico | 31-1-0 (28 KOs)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
Mexico | 42-4-0 (35 KOs)
6. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 40-7-0 (36 KOs)
7. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico | 51-7-0 (45 KOs)
8. **MIKEY GARCIA**
U.S. | 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
9. **BILL DIB**
Australia | 33-1-0 (20 KOs)
10. **CELESTINO CABALLERO**
Panama | 36-4-0 (23 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan | 39-4-3 (24 KOs)
2. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba | 9-0-0 (7 KOs)
3. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines | 28-1-0 (18 KOs))
4. **AKIFUMA SHIMODA**
Japan | 24-3-1 (10 KOs)
5. **P. KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand | 45-2-0 (31 KOs)
6. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
S. Africa | 33-6-0 (18 KOs)
7. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada | 34-2-0 (12 KOs)
8. **RICO RAMOS**
U.S. | 20-1-0 (11 KOs)
9. **MASAAKI SERIE**
Japan | 21-4-0 (9 KOs)
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
Puerto Rico | 21-2-1 (18 KOs)

SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR UPDATED RATINGS AT RINGTV.COM.

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama | 32-1-1 (11 KOs)
2. **ABNER MARES**
   U.S. | 23-0-1 (13 KOs)
3. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana | 28-4-0 (22 KOs)
4. **ERIC MOREL**
   U.S. | 46-2-0 (23 KOs)
5. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia | 37-4-1 (27 KOs)
6. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia | 20-2-1 (14 KOs)
7. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan | 27-1-0 (17 KOs)
8. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines | 29-2-3 (18 KOs)
9. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
   Japan | 15-0-2 (11 KOs)
10. **JORGE ARCE**
    Mexico | 60-6-2 (46 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina | 35-1-2 (19 KOs)
2. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
   Thailand | 20-4-1 (7 KOs)
3. **TOMONOBU SHIMIZU**
   Japan | 19-3-1 (9 KOs)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico | 36-7-2 (26 KOs)
5. **TEPPARITH KOKIETGYM**
   Thailand | 19-2-0 (12 KOs)
6. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico | 36-13-1 (24 KOs)
7. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan | 23-2-1 (12 KOs)
8. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico | 21-1-0 (15 KOs)
9. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan | 16-4-1 (10 KOs)
10. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ**
    Mexico | 13-1-1 (7 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C **P. WONJONGKAM**
Thailand | 83-3-2 (45 KOs)

1. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 32-2-0 (25 KOs)
2. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   U.S. | 30-3-0 (17 KOs)
3. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   S. Africa | 28-2-0 (19 KOs)
4. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines | 26-0-0 (10 KOs)
5. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines | 29-6-2 (17 KOs)
6. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
   Mexico | 37-6-1 (29 KOs)
7. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama | 23-3-0 (18 KOs)
8. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina | 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
9. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
   Japan | 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
10. **EDGAR SOSA**
    Mexico | 44-7-0 (27 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico | 34-2-3 (21 KOs)
2. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua | 30-0-0 (25 KOs)
3. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines | 29-1-3 (16 KOs)
4. **MASAYUKI KURODA**
   Japan | 21-3-0 (13 KOs)
5. **KOMPAYAK PORPRAMOOK**
   Thailand | 44-3-0 (30 KOs)
6. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico | 22-2-1 (14 KOs)
7. **RYO MIYAZAKI**
   Japan | 16-0-3 (10 KOs)
8. **RAMON HIRALES**
   Mexico | 16-3-1 (9 KOs)
9. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
   Philippines | 16-2-0 (10 KOs)
10. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
    Mexico | 35-22-4 (22 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   S. Africa | 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan | 9-0-0 (6 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
   Mexico | 14-1-0 (6 KOs)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico | 31-2-1 (18 KOs)
5. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua | 29-3-0 (22 KOs)
6. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   Thailand | 20-0-0 (5 KOs)
7. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines | 29-4-6 (19 KOs)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan | 24-4-0 (10 KOs)
9. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines | 25-6-1 (21 KOs)
10. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
    Japan | 15-2-0 (8 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines | 54-3-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR**
   U.S. | 42-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
   Argentina | 48-2-2 (27 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
4. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines | 28-1-0 (18 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT
5. **ANDRE WARD**
   U.S. | 25-0-0 (13 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 53-6-1 (39 KOs) | LIGHTWEIGHT
7. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   Ukraine | 56-3-0 (49 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
8. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand | 83-3-2 (45 KOs) | FLYWEIGHT
9. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   U.S. | 28-0-0 (12 KOs) | JR. WELTERWEIGHT
10. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
    Ukraine | 44-2-0 (40 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the Top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's No. 1 and No. 2 contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our No. 1 and No. 3 contenders.

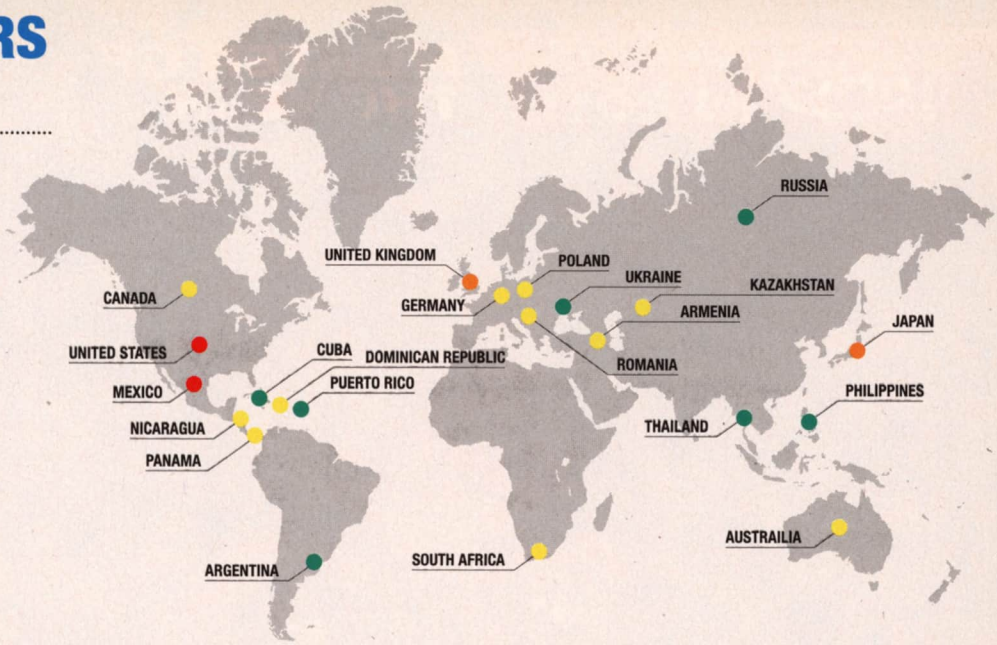
The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on RATINGS at RingTV.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	33
MEXICO	30
JAPAN	16
UNITED KINGDOM	12
PHILIPPINES	7
THAILAND	6
UKRAINE	6
ARGENTINA	5
CUBA	5
PUERTO RICO	5
RUSSIA	5
SOUTH AFRICA	4
PANAMA	4
POLAND	4
GERMANY	3
AUSTRALIA	2
CANADA	2
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2
KAZAKHSTAN	2
NICARAGUA	2
ROMANIA	2
ARMENIA	2
BULGARIA	1
CAMEROON	1
COLOMBIA	1
DENMARK	1
FINLAND	1
FRANCE	1
GHANA	1
HUNGARY	1
INDONESIA	1
ITALY	1
JAMAICA	1
NAMIBIA	1
NIGERIA	1
SLOVENIA	1
SPAIN	1
TURKEY	1
UZBEKISTAN	1



● 30 OR MORE ● 20 - 29 ● 10 - 19 ● 5 - 9 ● 2 - 4

U.S. VS. USSR

THE COLD WAR IS HISTORY BUT WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FUN TO COMPARE THE U.S. WITH THE COUNTRIES THAT ONCE COMPRISED ITS ARCH RIVAL, THE USSR. RUSSIA, UKRAINE, ARMENIA, KAZAKHSTAN AND UZBEKISTAN ARE REPRESENTED.

DIVISION	U.S..	USSR
HEAVYWEIGHT	1	6
CRUSIERWEIGHT	2	2
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT	3	2
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT	2	2
MIDDLEWEIGHT	0	1
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT	3	1
WELTERWEIGHT	5	1
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT	6	0
LIGHTWEIGHT	3	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT	3	0
FEATHERWEIGHT	1	0
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT	1	0
BANTAMWEIGHT	2	1
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT	0	0
FLYWEIGHT	1	0
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT	0	0
STRAWWEIGHT	0	0
TOTAL	**33**	**16**

OLDEST, YOUGEST

THE OLDEST AND YOUNGEST BOXERS RATED BY THE RING.

OLDEST

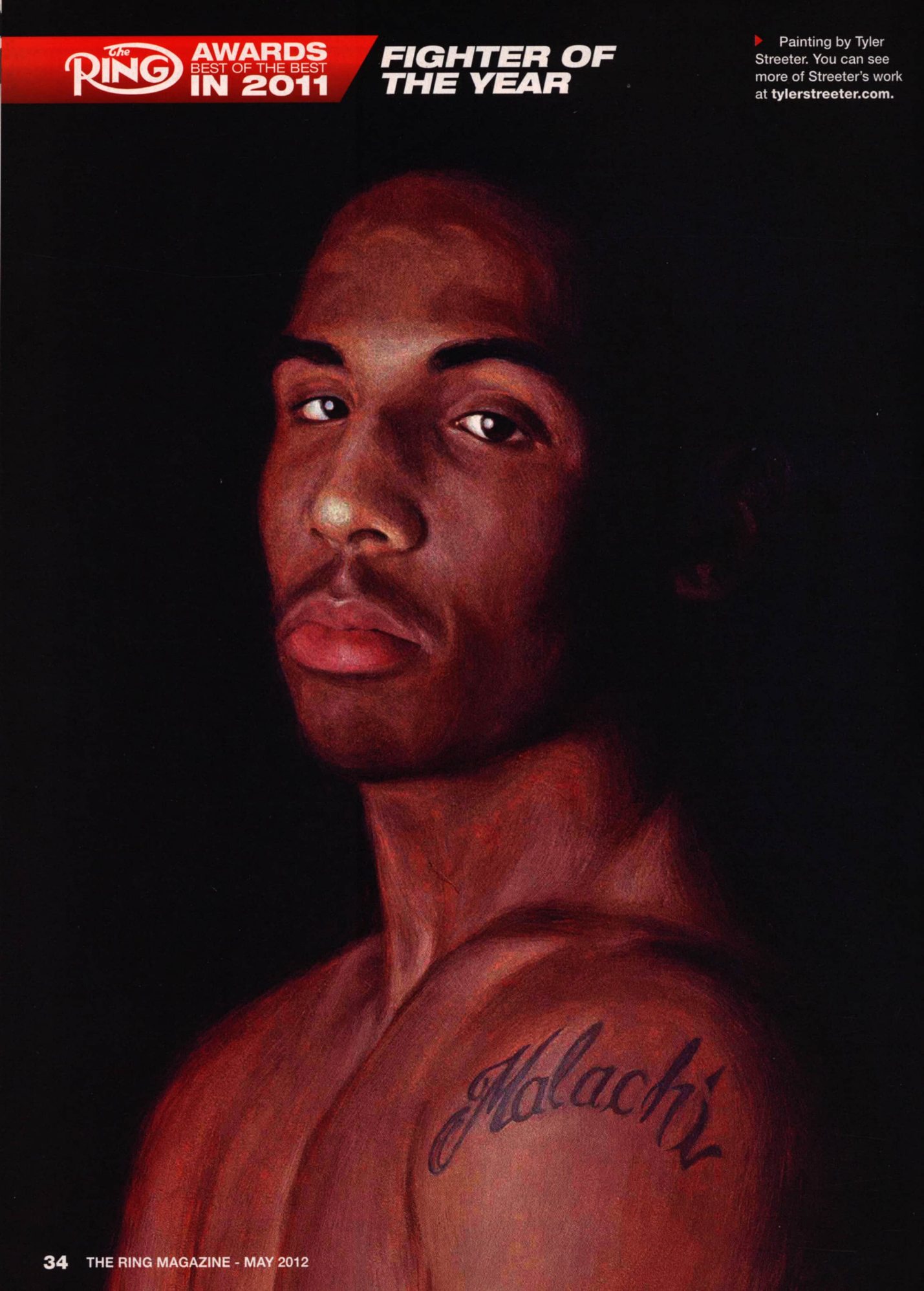
1. BERNARD HOPKINS	47
2. ANTONIO TAVER	43
3. GLEN JOHNSON	43
4. VITALI KLITSCHKO	40
5. SHANE MOSLEY	40
6. GUILLERMO JONES	39
7. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE	38
8. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ	38
9. ZSOLT ERDEI	37
10. SERGIO MARTINEZ	36

YOUNGEST

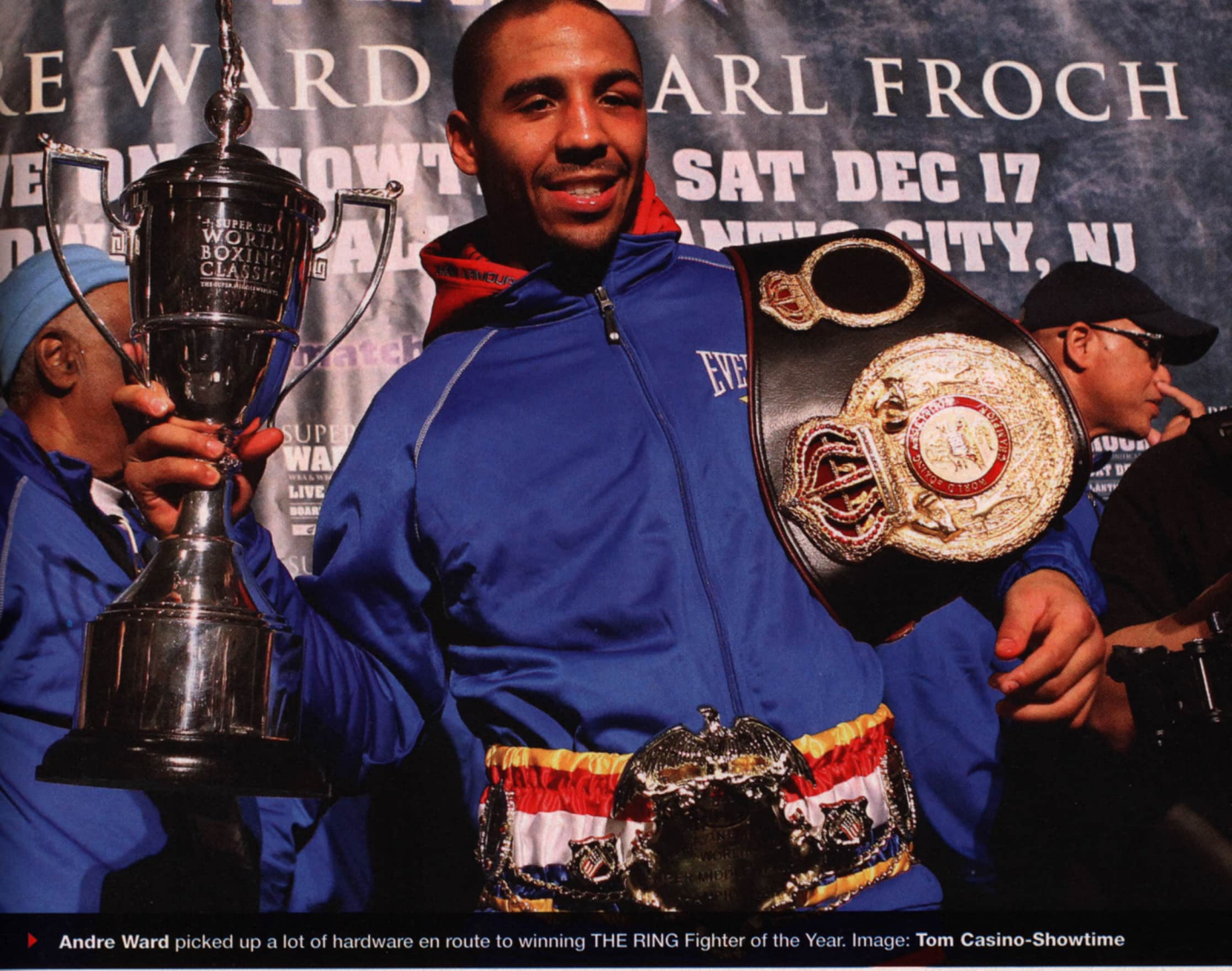
1. JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ	21
2. SAUL ALVAREZ	21
3. JOHNRIEL CASIMERO	22
4. ADRIEN BRONER	22
5. KAZUTO IOKA	22
6. SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI	22
7. TEPARITH SINGWANCHA	23
8. HERNAN MARQUEZ	23
9. RYO MIYAZAKI	23
10. TYSON FURY	23

NOTE: The country of fighters who have spent large portions of their lives in two countries was determined primarily by where they spent the bulk of their childhood.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR



Painting by Tyler Streeter. You can see more of Streeter's work at **tylerstreeter.com.**



Andre Ward picked up a lot of hardware en route to winning THE RING Fighter of the Year. Image: **Tom Casino-Showtime**

ANDRE WARD

WHO ELSE?

By **Bart Barry**

When Showtime announced its Super Six World Boxing Classic in 2009, insiders and fans hailed its structure as innovative, its field as first-rate, and predicted its winner would likely be Denmark's Mikkel Kessler or Armenian Arthur Abraham. While none of its original six participants were wholly discounted, undefeated American Andre Ward and Englishman Carl Froch landed in the lower middle of most prognosticators' lineups. Twenty-six months after the tournament began, though, after setbacks galore – withdrawals, replacements, postponements and frequent dissent – Ward and Froch were the only men who'd managed to endure the tournament's rigors. They fought one another for the Super Six trophy on Dec. 17 in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall.

Boxing with a left hand he'd injured in the final week of training camp, a hand that broke halfway through the match, Ward unmanned Froch, exactly as he'd done with Kessler, Allan Green and Abraham. In doing so, Ward became the Super Six champion, THE RING'S super middleweight champion and THE RING'S 2011 Fighter of the Year.

Unlike perennial Fighter of the Year contenders before him, though – men like Filipino Manny Pacquiao and American Floyd Mayweather Jr. – the 27-year-old

Ward did not have last say on the opponents he faced during his run. By signing a contract for the Super Six World Boxing Classic, Ward agreed to fight any super middleweight Showtime matched him with. This was an important distinction. Ward did not have the luxury of choosing his next opponent, venue or a convenient catch-weight to set his foe at some disadvantage. Ward's claim on Fighter of the Year honors, then, is as honest as any man's before him.

Ward fought Abraham in May and Froch in December, and he fought both similarly. He disarmed them with pressure, toughness, mental agility and underrated power. Ward's semifinals match with Abraham found the American Olympic gold medalist across from a proud man with heavy hands who had been outboxed and embarrassed by Froch six months before. Ward went directly to Abraham's chest and caused him quickly to forego his training camp plans for a higher punch output. Eighteen minutes across from Ward put Abraham right back in his shell and about as far from victory as possible.

After decisioning Abraham by wide, unanimous scores of 120-108, 118-110 and 118-111, Ward confronted Froch, the Super Six's other surprise finalist. Ward undid Froch before their opening bell. Sitting across from him in a promotional discussion Showtime named "Staredown," Ward outwitted the garrulous Brit and took control.

What he started in the studio he later brought to the ring. Between the Boardwalk Hall ropes, Ward proved himself a man of strength and character, owning an underestimated chin. Ever cognizant of Froch's power, Ward used his quickness to wallop him with left hands in the fight's opening quarter and then went for Froch's heart, putting himself well within reach of the Englishman's noteworthy power. Ward beat Froch by unanimous scores of 118-110, 115-113 and 115-113.

"He was too close, or he was too far out of range," Froch later said, providing the very definition of the word outbox.

Ward kept his demeanor ever dignified and hopeful during his two-year rise from titleholder to unified champion.

"This is not the end. It's really the beginning for us," Ward said after beating Froch. "We're going to get better."

For what he accomplished in the Super Six, Andre Ward is both THE RING'S 2011 Fighter of the Year and the best prizefighter of the last 26 months.

RUNNERS UP

NONITO DONAIRE: Donaire cited Andre Ward when he was asked to name his largest influences. The 29-year-old "Filipino Flash," who scored 2011's most pronounced knockout over Mexican Fernando Montiel in a bantamweight title-unification match, named his fellow Bay Area resident as a great inspiration.

BRANDON RIOS: The 25 year-old Californian, made a strong case for himself as potential 2011 Fighter of the Year in part by scoring a 10th-round knockout victory over Venezuelan Miguel Acosta in February. After beating Acosta, Rios stopped fellow Californian Urbano Antillon in July and Englishman John Murray in December.

ABNER MARES: The Super Six was not the only Showtime tourney that crowned a champion in 2011. Mares, who twice decisioned Ghana's Joseph Agbeko, the second time more decisively than the first, to become the winner of Showtime's inaugural

Bantamweight Tournament and earned a place among finalists for THE RING'S Fighter of the Year.

ORLANDO SALIDO: The 31-year-old Mexican surprised many onlookers by dropping and then stopping Puerto Rico's undefeated Juan Manuel Lopez in the eighth round of an April fight. Salido then burnished his resume with thrilling knockout victories over Japan's Kenichi Yamaguchi and Filipino Weng Haya. ■

Andre Ward's convincing victory over **Carl Froch** (left) in the final of the Super Six World Boxing Classic clinched the Fighter of the Year award.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

VICTOR ORTIZ VS. ANDRE BERTO

UNFORGETTABLE BRAWL

By **Doug Fischer**

Going into their HBO-televised fight last April, boxing insiders viewed Andre Berto and Victor Ortiz as prime examples of what's wrong with the sport.

Berto, the undefeated WBC welterweight beltholder and heavy favorite in the matchup, was practically given a major title along with eight consecutive HBO appearances thanks to his association with high-powered manager Al Haymon. The explosive boxer-puncher was grossly overpaid against mostly soft opposition on those HBO dates. The one solid contender he faced, Luis Collazo, nearly beat him.

Ortiz, who was making his welterweight debut against Berto, was christened "the next Oscar De La Hoya" by his promoter, De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions, before passing any major tests that would have proved he was anything more than a talented prospect. When the southpaw counter-puncher did face a real contender in Marcos Maidana, he was overwhelmed by the relentless slugger. Golden Boy continued to hype Ortiz even as the young man underperformed in subsequent bouts.

Hardcore fans, who viewed Berto and Ortiz as coddled and unproven, did not want to root for either fighter, but they stood and cheered for both once the fight began.

Both men brought their vaunted speed, power and brute strength to their showdown but they backed those athletic gifts up with the kind of intangibles that define real fighters – determination, courage and desire. Their fight, which took place in Mashantucket, Conn., featured heated exchanges, knockdowns, unexpected momentum shifts and lots of drama.

In other words, their combination of talent and tenacity produced a *real* fight, one that fans won't soon forget.

By the time Berto and Ortiz reached the halfway point of the bout, fans were already tweeting, texting and posting on internet boxing forums that the eventual 12-round thriller, which Ortiz won by close decision, was a fight-of-the-year candidate.

Ortiz set the tone in the first round by sending Berto to the canvas with a cuffing left a little over a minute into the bout. Referee Mike Ortega did not count it as a knockdown, but a minute later Ortiz connected with a right hook that rocked Berto into a corner, where the underdog bombarded the titleholder to the canvas with uppercuts and crosses.

This knockdown *did* count, and the barnburner was officially on. The two boxer-punchers exchanged hard shots throughout the second round until Ortiz walked into a right hand that dropped him to the seat of his trunks before the end of the round.

The young fighters were now tied for knockdowns.

Ortiz remained the busier of the two in rounds three, four and five, but he also continued to stalk directly into Berto's right hands – one of which blasted him to the canvas midway through round six. The challenger beat the count and tried to survive on still-wobbly legs. Most observers thought the fight was over. This was, after all, the same round Ortiz basically quit against Maidana. However, Ortiz fired back whenever he could, and by the end of the round he had recovered enough to punch with authority. Berto was careless enough to lunge into a right hook that dropped him on his side, driving fans at the Foxwoods Resort and those watching on TV into a frenzy.

Again the warriors were tied for knockdowns.

Both continued to fight with all of their heart, but Ortiz outworked the 27-year-old Florida native over the second half of the fight. The 24-year-old's aggression and activity was rewarded by the judges, who scored the fight 115-110, 114-111 and 114-112 in his favor.

The two are set to do it again in June, provided Berto's injured bicep – which resulted in the postponement the original February date of their rematch – has healed properly.

In the end, the supposed poster children for what's wrong with boxing epitomized why fans fall in love with the sport. When the return bout was announced, it was viewed as an example of what's right with boxing.

Victor Ortiz (left) and **Andre Berto** gave boxing fans an unforgettable show, making their brawl Fight of the Year.

Image: **Emily Harney-Fightwireimages**

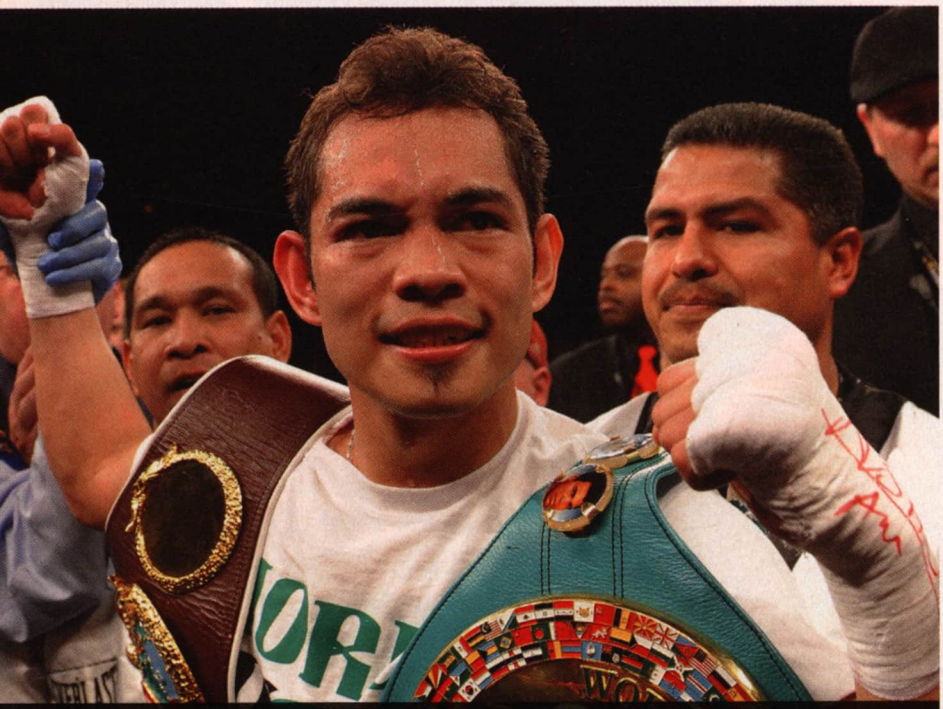
RUNNERS UP

PAWEL WOLAK D 10 DELVIN RODRIGUEZ: Wolak, a relentless pressure fighter, was on the cusp of a title shot. Rodriguez, a gutsy boxer-puncher, was fighting for his career after losing three of his previous four bouts. Neither fighter could afford a loss. Neither fighter did after giving their all in every round. The fans won on this night.

HERNAN MARQUEZ TKO 11 LUIS CONCEPCION: Marquez's WBA flyweight title winning effort against Concepcion was a 112-pound version of Berto-Ortiz, only with more machismo, more exchanges, and a knockout ending. Marquez, who dropped Concepcion in the third and 10th rounds, took over the late rounds after the two flyweights traded knockdowns in the breathtaking opening round.

AKIRA YAEGASHI TKO 10 PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK: Imagine Wolak-Rodriguez I fought at a faster pace and you'll have an idea of how this WBA 105-pound title bout went down. Yaegashi, an underrated Japanese boxer, played the part of Rodriguez. Porpramook, a tough-as-nails Thai fighter, had Wolak's role. Thanks to Youtube, you don't have to use your imagination. Check it out. You won't regret it.

LAMONT PETERSON SD 12 AMIR KHAN: Khan had faced and bested a variety of styles before taking on Peterson in the American's hometown, but Peterson's blend of technique and tenacity proved to be the UK star's undoing (along with two controversial point deductions) in an intense and heated boxing match that was so good the junior welterweights had to do it again. ■



Nonito Donaire must've felt invincible after his dramatic second-round knockout of **Fernando Montiel**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

NONITO DONAIRE TKO2 FERNANDO MONTIEL

By **Cliff Rold**

The year's most-striking finish normally is the sort where a man falls and stays there. This year, Fernando Montiel got up.

At least his body did. His senses remained on the canvas courtesy of one "Filipino Flash."

A division long adrift, bantamweight has experienced a thrilling renaissance in recent years on U.S. television. The pairing of former flyweight titleholder Nonito Donaire and three-division champion Montiel had 118-pound warriors back on HBO for the first time in years. Both men's reputations for stopping fights in an instant said a lot about why.

Montiel entered the bout hot off a knockout of the excellent Hozumi Hasegawa in Japan to unify the WBC and WBO belts. Having previously held belts at 112 and 115 pounds, Montiel was 17-2 in title fights and had never been stopped.

Donaire, blessed with uncommon speed and power, was only 4-0 in title contests (not including bouts for an interim title at 115 pounds). All those victories had come inside eight rounds. The most notable was his first: Matched with undefeated Vic Darchinyan in 2007, Donaire scored RING Magazine's Knockout of the Year in Round 5 with a shot so hard that Darchinyan seemed to not even realize he'd been hit with it in the post-fight interview.

Donaire needed less time than that on Feb. 19, 2011.

Round 1 was rough going for Montiel. He was rocked by a left hand and cut, but stood his ground and looked for openings. He found some in the second, his experience allowing him to time Donaire and create some room to operate. A clean right hand landed on Donaire's face but it didn't change Montiel's fortunes.

Instead, it cashed them out. Donaire ate the blow without effect and reacted immediately. A sweeping left landed with a sound strangely akin to the lash of a whip. Montiel pitched forward, frozen in time for a moment before toppling onto his back. With HBO commentator Roy Jones insisting, "It's over with," Montiel could be seen kicking his legs and flailing his arms involuntarily. Eyes glazed, he shockingly rolled to his side and fought to get up. It was a tremendous demonstration of courage.

Referee Russell Mora picked up the count at five, watching Montiel closely as he stumbled back to the ground at seven. Pushing off, Montiel finally found his feet at nine. He tried to bang his gloves together to show Mora he was willing to continue, but barely managed it. Mora would have been best served to end matters there but he gave Montiel the benefit of the doubt. Whether it was a benefit or not is questionable, but it lasted only seconds. Montiel's heart had spoken louder than logic and Donaire was on him right away, landing a crushing left hook and just missing with a right against the ropes to force Mora's immediate reconsideration at 2:25 of Round 2.

The ending was a chilling

Nonito Donaire immediately understood the magnitude of his eye-popping Knockout of the Year against **Fernando Montiel**.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

reminder of what Donaire is capable of. Fans who had waited since Darchinyan to see Donaire display his talent on a bigger stage had their wishes fulfilled and Donaire had locked up his second trip to the Knockout of the Year winner's circle.

RUNNERS UP

LUCIAN BUTE KO 4 JEAN PAUL MENDY: IBF super middleweight titleholder Bute looked well on his way to victory after three rounds, but he clearly had an early appointment the night he was challenged by the undefeated Mendy. Three jabs softened his defenses, and a booming left to Mendy's temple sent him to the mat face-first in Round 4.

OLA AFOLABI KO 1 TERRY DUNSTAN: Cruiserweight contender Afolabi wasted little time in dispensing with Dunstan. With just less than thirty seconds to go in Round 1, an echoing right hand slammed into the head of Dunstan and it was all over.

RICO RAMOS KO 7 AKIFUMI SHIMODA: Ramos wasn't moving his hands and hadn't won a round in his title challenge against WBA 122-pound beltholder Shimoda. A perfect left hook to the chin at mid-ring erased the deficit in the seventh. Shimoda worked to get off the floor but stumbled forward badly at the count of nine. His belt was gone.

HANK LUNDY KO 6 DAVID DIAZ: Former Olympian and lightweight titleholder Diaz has had his ups and downs. Against Lundy, it was a big down. Bleeding badly from the right eye in Round 6, Lundy landed a massive counter right and Diaz went to his back with no effort to rise. The referee didn't bother to count. ■

JAMES KIRKLAND VS. ALFREDO ANGULO, ROUND 1

PITCHED BATTLE

By **Cliff Rold**

Great fights come in different forms. Some are marked by escalating tensions over the course of many rounds. Others seem to explode at the opening bell, before fans have had time to settle into their seats.

Marvin Hagler-Tommy Hearns was the latter, as was Juan Meza-Jaime Garza. Add Kirkland-Angulo to the list.

The fight came together, much to the satisfaction of hardcore fans who had wanted it for a few years, with Kirkland and Angulo at different points of career turbulence. Angulo, struggling with immigration issues, had gone from rising HBO staple to ring absentee in 2010 and 2011.

An undefeated Kirkland was imprisoned for parts of 2009 and 2010 for a probation violation, thus stalling his rise as a junior

The first round of the epic battle between **Alfredo Angulo** (left) and **James Kirkland** – the Round of the Year – was breathtaking. Image: **Roberto Fernandez-Hoganphotos**

middleweight knockout artist. Three fights into his 2011 return, he was stopped in the opening round by lightly regarded Nobuhiro Ishida, who had scored just seven knockouts in 30 fights.

The match between Kirkland and the hard-punching Angulo – in Cancun, Mexico, no less – carried a dark cloud of danger. Those clouds erupted at the sound of the bell for Round No. 1.

Immediately pressing forward, Kirkland, back under the tutelage of disciplinarian trainer Ann Wolfe, bulled Angulo toward the corner and was targeting the body when a right-hand counter found his chin. Kirkland went down, hurt, to the seat of his trunks. He did not remain there. On shaky legs, he rose by referee Johny Callas's count of four. Kirkland nodded his readiness to continue, staring straight ahead at Angulo as his shoulders swayed back and forth.

Both men fired as Angulo forced Kirkland to the ropes. Kirkland covered up where he could and slid away, backing across the ring and again into the ropes. Angulo stalked him from one corner to another, unleashing bombs onto Kirkland's guard. Changing gears, Angulo went to the body and nearly toppled his prey into the corner. Slipping and covering up, Kirkland began to move his hands, touching Angulo where he could before increasingly adding mustard to his shots.

With about a minute to go, a Kirkland left hook landed grazingly. Angulo seemed to be out of breath as suddenly he was being walked backward. Turning his back into the ropes, Kirkland slipped a volley of Angulo punches. Angulo was losing steam with each throw. A Kirkland right landed stiff and Angulo went backward. Another right sent Angulo into the ropes and suddenly it was Angulo fighting for his life in the corner.

A right and left landed. Another right and two lefts sent Angulo reeling along the ropes, his legs trembling. Kirkland pursued with both hands firing, left hands loaded. One to the temple, another to the chin, and then a missing right and left provided the shove needed to send Angulo down with 14 seconds to go.

Angulo rose at four, raising his gloved fists to his head to signal he could go on. Kirkland came forward with a jab and the bell sounded to allow Angulo safe passage back to the corner.

The brave Mexican was never in the fight again. He shed everything he had in the savage opening frame, leaving five rounds of postscript to endure before succumbing in the sixth. Kirkland had saved his career and, long before the end, both men had etched themselves in boxing lore forever.

It only took three minutes. It was the Round of the Year.

RUNNERS UP

PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK-AKIRA YAEGASHI, ROUND 8: Arguably strawweight's greatest fight ever reached its zenith in the final round. Challenger and eventual winner **Akira Yaegashi** appeared to have WBA titleholder **Pornsawan Porpramook** ready to go before the Thai champion roared back off the ropes. The round ended with both men winging bombs, the crowd aflame.

ANDRE BERTO-VICTOR ORTIZ, ROUND 5: Berto, down in the first, dropped Ortiz hard in the fifth and looked as if he'd turned the tide in a back-and-forth war. With seconds to go Ortiz fired off the ropes and Berto hit the deck. Ortiz never looked back on the way to a decision win.

HERNAN MARQUEZ-LUIS CONCEPCION, ROUND 1: In the start to a wild 10-round shootout, a counter hook dropped Marquez in the first and he looked ready to go. Surviving, he returned the favor to WBA flyweight beltholder Concepcion just before the bell en route to what would be a title-winning effort.

BRANDON RIOS-URBANO ANTILLON, ROUND 1: WBA lightweight champion Rios and contender Antillon promised thrills on paper and delivered right away, going toe-to-toe for all of a breathless opening frame. Rios would eventually score the knockout in the third.

ANTONIO DEMARCO-JORGE LINARES, ROUND 11: Well behind, Demarco unleashed a furious assault to win the vacant WBC lightweight crown by stopping a crimson-masked Linares in Round 11. ■

NOBUHIRO ISHIDA KO1 JAMES KIRKLAND

SHOCKER

By **Jake Donovan**

Nobuhiro Ishida and his team couldn't have been more pleased after his stunning first-round knockout of **James Kirkland**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

The plan wasn't clear when James Kirkland returned to boxing early in 2011. The unbeaten Texan ranked among the sport's most exciting fighters prior to his incarceration, but needed time to rebuild before being thrown all the way back into the mix.

His first two comeback bouts revealed little more than the fact that Kirkland wasn't the fighter he was prior to his prison term. An upset seemed to be inevitable, but no one expected it to happen so soon.

Nobuhiro Ishida was the very definition of a stay-busy opponent – 35 years old, light-punching and with zero wins of note, while having lost every time he stepped up in competition.

Luckily for the Japanese middleweight, he found a heavily favored opponent who was ill-prepared for what the night would bring.

Kirkland had grown accustomed to the boot camp-style training sessions conducted by trainer Ann Wolfe prior to his break from the ring. However, the two disagreed over the planned direction of his career, leading the Texas southpaw to enlist the services of veteran trainer Kenny Adams.

That proved to be his first mistake, but not quite as fatal as apparently believing that every opponent would faint the moment he laid hands upon them. Such was the painful lesson learned on this April night in Vegas, when Kirkland got caught very early in the fight and never recovered.

Three knockdowns later, he was being rescued by Joe Cortez while suffering the first loss of his career. The humiliation was enough to convince the proud fighter to reconsider what led him to stray from the trainer who knew him best; he reunited with Wolfe later in the year.

"I take nothing away from Kenny Adams, but I'm a different fighter than when I was training with him," Kirkland would say later in the year when reflecting on the training camp heading into that fight. "Anyone can go into camp and drop weight. But to have all of the right tools, you have to be in a camp with the right person. I wasn't anywhere nearly prepared for that fight."

Kirkland made sure to come prepared for every fight since then, having won three straight. The biggest of the lot was, of course, his off-the-canvas, sixth-round stoppage of Alfredo Angulo in a fight that was well-received in this awards season. More importantly, it put the power puncher back at the forefront as he entered 2012, inching closer to a coveted world title shot.

Ishida wasn't quite afforded the same opportunities, despite being the guy who won the fight. A November tune-up appearance on the undercard of Saul Alvarez

Nobuhiro Ishida (right) put a shocking end to **James Kirkland's** momentum by stopping the junior middleweight contender in the Upset of the Year. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

– for whom Ishida serves as a chief sparring partner – was the only bone thrown his way before landing a junior middleweight assignment against Paul Williams, against whom his unusual height and reach were cancelled out and his limitations revealed on the way to losing a shutout.

All that the 35-year-old was left with in the end was the satisfaction of being one of the few who actually saw the end result coming a mile away.

"I saw the last fight (a second-round knockout of Jhon Berrio) and I saw that he got hurt early," Ishida revealed after the fight. "I've seen him get hurt in other fights, and he covered up to recover. I know that nobody was expecting me to win because he was being made into a big name, but I knew I could win the fight."

With that belief came the performance of a lifetime for Ishida and the 2011 Upset of the Year.

RUNNERS UP

ORLANDO SALIDO KO 8 JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ: A long-anticipated featherweight showdown between Yuriorkis Gamboa and Lopez never came to be after the latter suffered a knockout loss to common opponent Salido. Their April bout was fought on even terms before Salido – who scored a knockdown earlier in the fight – caught Lopez in the seventh round in forcing a shocking stoppage on the road in Puerto Rico.

JORGE ARCE KO 12 WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.: Vazquez looked sharp in the early going of his May bout against the former champ, including a fourth-round knockdown. However, things took a turn for the worse for the second-generation Boricua boxer, who found himself under siege in the 12th and final round before being rescued by his father and trainer Wilfredo Sr.

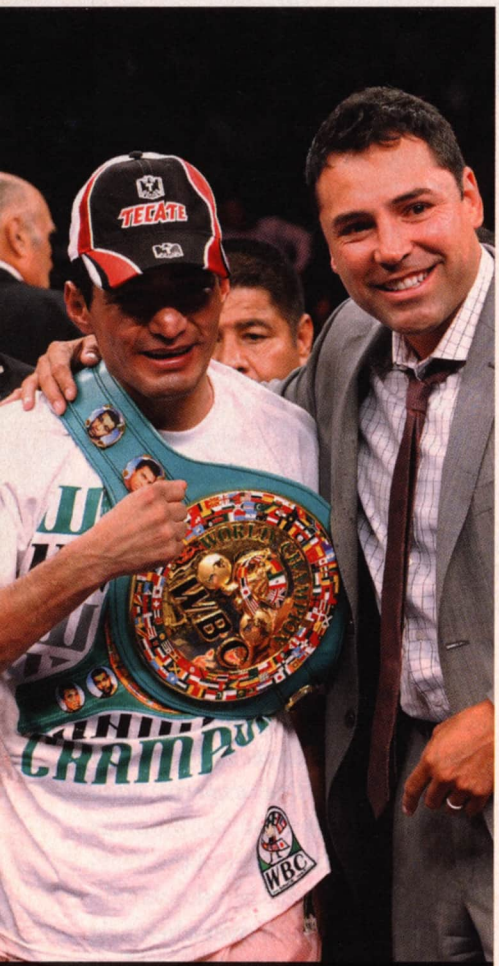
JAMES KIRKLAND KO 6 ALFREDO ANGULO: Seven months after being drilled by light-hitting Nohubiro Ishida, few people believed Kirkland's chin would hold up on the road against Angulo in their November clash. Those beliefs were nearly confirmed 30 seconds in, but Kirkland turned the tide by round's end and never looked back, battering Angulo round after round before finally putting him away in the sixth.

BRIAN VILORIA KO 8 GIOVANI SEGURA: Viloria was a near 3-1 underdog in his flyweight title defense against the granite chinned Segura, who had recently moved up in weight. The experts were severely thrown for a loop as Viloria capped a Fighter of the Year-worthy campaign in shockingly dominating fashion, overwhelming the free-swinging Mexican before forcing the stoppage in the early moments of the eighth. ■

ERIK MORALES

BACK FROM THE DEAD

By **Don Stradley**



Erik Morales (with promoter **Oscar De La Hoya**) proved a lot of people wrong in 2011. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

On Nov. 18, 2006, Erik Morales was sitting in a ring in Las Vegas, shaking his head. He'd just been pummeled by Manny Pacquiao, stopped in the third round. To many it seemed like the hard battles of Morales' career had caught up to him that night. After another loss, this one on points to David Diaz in 2007, it looked as if it was time for "El Terrible" to retire.

Flash forward to 2010. Morales quietly returned to boxing, winning three bouts in Mexico. No one took much note of this comeback, for it felt like nothing more than a grab for some quick paydays. Fans didn't expect much. They looked the other way, actually, focusing on other, more important fighters who were in their primes. Besides, conventional wisdom said Morales' return would be over as soon as some younger fighter knocked him out. In April 2011 he was matched against Marcos Maidana, one of the biggest hitters in boxing. This, for sure, would be the end of Morales' return. Most thought he wouldn't last five rounds.

They were wrong.

The bout got off to a rocky start. In the first round Morales took some hard whacks that raised a nasty swelling around his eye. In no time at all it was an ugly, purple lump, turning Morales into an old Cyclops. But after surviving a rough first frame, Morales gave as good as he got for most of the bout, dominating the middle rounds with smart counters, giving his younger opponent a boxing lesson. The action was so close that Maidana was forced into rallying during the final two stanzas. One judge scored the bout a draw. The other two were impressed by Maidana's late rally and scored the bout in his favor. No matter, though. Morales had been brilliant in defeat. In a career filled with spectacular fights, it was one of his most admirable. But there were still those who thought his gallant effort was merely the last gasp of an aging fighter.

They were wrong again.

Morales was then matched against Lucas Matthysse for Sept. 19, 2011, but undefeated Pablo Cano substituted when Matthysse fell ill. The WBC, having wrongly stripped titleholder Timothy Bradley of the junior welterweight belt, declared that Morales and Cano would fight for the vacant title. Publicists and some members of the press made a lot of noise about Morales attempting to become the first Mexican to win titles in four weight classes. But while the belt might look nice in his trophy case, the real issue was whether he had anything left after his torrid battle with Maidana.

It took Morales a few rounds to warm up his 35-year-old legs, but by the fifth he was finding his rhythm and connecting with his right cross. Cano was not an easy assignment – the youngster opened a cut over Morales' eye during the middle rounds – but Morales kept

Erik Morales (right) upset prevailing wisdom when he gave **Marcos Maidana** all he could handle and then stopped **Pablo Cano** to win the vacant WBC junior welterweight title, thus earning Comeback of the Year honors. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Cano was bleeding heavily and each blow from Morales sent blood spraying across the ring. By the end of the 10th round, Cano's camp had seen enough. As Cano sat in his corner dejected and bloody, his team waved off the fight.

The comeback that no one took seriously turned out to be very real, after all. It was real enough to be THE RING's Comeback of the Year.

RUNNERS UP

JAMES KIRKLAND: The junior middleweight contender was about as low as a fighter can get, having spent more than a year in prison and then getting KO'd in one round back in April. He made a resounding comeback in November by traveling to Mexico to face powerful Alfredo Angulo. Dropped in the first round, he stormed back to score a violent TKO and re-establish himself in his weight class.

BRIAN VILORIA: Viloria has been dismissed a number of times in his career. He lost to Carlos Tamara last January, but in July he surprised us all by scoring a stunning upset over Giovani Segura to win a flyweight title.

JORGE ARCE: The Mexican veteran suffered a few brutal losses in recent years but has been fighting consistently since then, winning bouts and showing a kind of second life that we couldn't have predicted. We knew he was tough, we knew he was entertaining, but we didn't know he'd still be performing so well. On May 7, 2011, he won a 122-pound title with an exciting 12th-round stoppage of unbeaten Wilfredo Vazquez Jr., and capped the year off by grabbing a vacant 118-pound belt in November.

ANTONIO TARVER: The fighter-turned-broadcaster was thought to be done after consecutive decision losses to Chad Dawson, but last year he traveled to Australia and scored a very impressive stoppage of Danny Green. ■

MANNY PACQUIAO-JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ III

ANOTHER CONTROVERSY

By **Jake Donovan**

Pacquiao-Mayweather or bust. That's the stance of boxing fans – and even many in the media – as the powers that be attempt to get the sport's two biggest stars in the ring together for what would be the most lucrative fight in boxing history.

If it's not going to be *that* event, then whatever else is offered had better be damn well worth the time and money spent on caring.

The third fight between Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez became *that* event.

Their November clash provided a perfect storm in regards to making an event memorable on every front: major hype; a groundbreaking promotion; sold out venue and tens of millions generated at the box office and on pay-per-view; a good fight and a controversial outcome.

All of this from a show whose initial announcement was first met with grumblings.

The fire was lit when HBO was caught off-guard by the news that Pacquiao and promoter Bob Arum would be taking their business across the street to Showtime for the showdown with Shane Mosley last May. The incident kicked off a series of events that eventually led to the forced resignation of longtime HBO Sports head honcho Ross Greenburg.

In bringing the sport's biggest money generator back home, Arum needed assurances that his next major event would be like no other.

HBO delivered.

The customary coverage featured the network's reality series, "24/7," but also went well above and beyond. The media tour turned out to be like no other, with thousands upon thousands of fans showing up for stops in the United States, Mexico and the Philippines.

HBO's newly created "HBO Overtime" series took fans behind the scenes after the weigh-in, on the day of the fight, and all of the post-fight hoopla in the moments after the November 12 fight was officially in the books.

In a first for any HBO PPV event, promotional spots were featured throughout the Major League Baseball playoffs coverage on TBS and also ran on 24-hour news network CNN, both of which are partnered with HBO under the Time Warner umbrella.

Where the event completely separated itself from the pack was with its awards ceremony-style coverage of the pre-fight weigh-in. For the first time in its more than 35 years in the sport, HBO televised the weigh-in live, in a show reminiscent of an "American Idol" finale.

Of course, none of that means anything without a major fight to follow. While the third installment of a series that extends back to 2004 was probably the weakest of the bunch in terms of wall-to-wall action, enough was offered to keep the sold-out MGM Grand Garden arena entertained over the course of the evening.

When all was said and done, public opinion was split on the outcome. Some felt that Pacquiao did just enough to hold on to his welterweight belt, though his mythical pound-for-pound crown was certainly in jeopardy. Many felt that Marquez defied the odds, that his chiseled physique had served him well in the catchweight bout, and that once again the Mexican showed that he simply has Pacquiao's number.

The majority decision was met with a chorus of boos, a first for Pacquiao, who had emerged as the hero to Mayweather's villain in their unresolved rivalry.

The box office receipts, however, had people behind the scenes cheering and applauding with the satisfaction that their efforts were well received. A sold out crowd of more than 16,000

and pay-per-view buys at around 1.4 million units offered plenty of good news to go around.

"I'm very proud of the resources that HBO and Time Warner have provided in presenting this event," noted HBO whiz-kid Mark Taffet, who heads up the pay-per-view division.

Even more pleased was the promoter who gives himself just the right amount of credit for convincing the self-proclaimed Network of Champions to finally catch up with the 21st Century.

"After a one-time hiatus, we are back with HBO PPV," Arum stated during fight week. "One thing we did was shake things up because HBO is now promoting on platforms never used before. They've done a terrific job in this new world and new technology of promoting this event."

What HBO also did, when all was said and done, was give us the 2011 Event of the Year.

RUNNERS UP

FLOYD MAYWEATHER VS. VICTOR ORTIZ: Pacquiao-Marquez III wasn't the only fight in which HBO broke new ground. The September pay-per-view show between Mayweather and Ortiz was the first to branch out to CNN as episodes of its "24/7" series appeared in midnight airings on the network. More memorable was the fight-ending sequence itself, which began with an intentional headbutt from Ortiz and ended with a "two-piece and a biscuit" from Mayweather, who knocked out his unsuspecting foe before he was even aware that the fight had resumed.

MIGUEL COTTO VS. ANTONIO MARGARITO: A loaded undercard and major revenge factor helped fuel interest in the December rematch between the two bitter rivals. Cotto avenged a previous loss with a 10th round stoppage in front of a sold-out Madison Square Garden crowd on a pay-per-view show that generated roughly 600,000 buys. The fight was in jeopardy just over a week prior, however, as an existing eye injury left Margarito and promoter Top Rank sweating out an emergency New York State Athletic Commission hearing before being medically cleared.

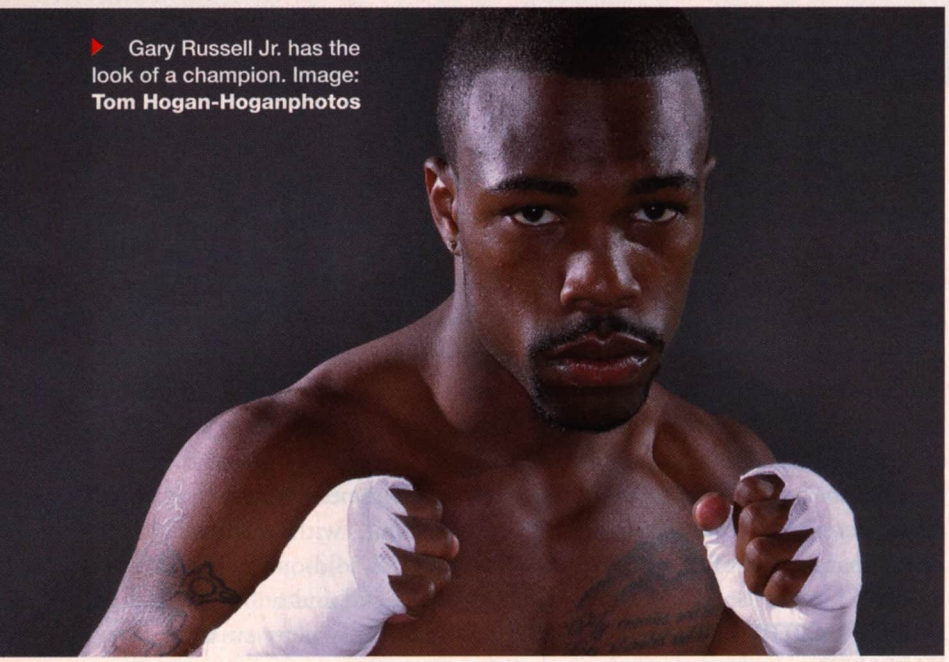
MANNY PACQUIAO VS. SHANE MOSLEY: The Pacquiao-Mosley pay-per-view event in May was a stinker on paper and in reality, but gained some major buzz when Top Rank decided to deliver the event to Showtime. Pre-fight buildup included promotional spots and airings of its "Fight Camp" series on parent company CBS during its coverage of the NCAA March Madness college basketball tournament, with the event itself drawing a sold-out crowd at the MGM Grand and selling more than 1.3 million pay-per-view units.

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO VS. DAVID HAYE: Heavyweight boxing in America is at an all-time low in approval rating, but quite the opposite is true overseas. Case in point, the July unification bout between lineal king and multi-alphabet belted Klitschko and mouthy Brit, Haye. The action in the ring – or lack thereof – took a considerable backseat to the worldwide attention it generated, in addition to a massive sold-out crowd of over 50,000 fans. ■

GARY RUSSELL JR.

RAPID ASCENT

By **Lem Satterfield**



Gary Russell Jr. has the look of a champion. Image: **Tom Hogan-Hoganphotos**

The handspeed was always there, as was the uncanny defense and the dazzling foot and head movement. Unbeaten featherweight prospect Gary Russell Jr.'s problem had been his chronically brittle hands.

But now it appears that that issue has been resolved. Russell's most-recent opponent as of press time, Heriberto Ruiz, would attest to that. Russell knocked him senseless in just over two minutes.

"I've had hand injuries my entire career," said the 23-year-old Russell, who fought six times last year. "But that [the Ruiz fight] was the first time where I didn't have any hand problems during my entire camp."

The finishing sequence was a crunching right hook to the body, followed by a left to the other side of Ruiz's torso and a perfectly placed left to the chin for the first-round stoppage.

The sudden ending was breathtaking.

"In the last fight, I was able to throw things together like I actually wanted to," Russell said. "I was able to put power into my punches the way that I wanted to."

That's not good news for the opponents of Russell, who has been named THE RING's Prospect of The Year.

Russell was a decorated amateur and a medal favorite in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, but that dream was dashed when he passed out in his dorm room – apparently because of weight issues – and missed his weigh-in. But only the nagging hand problems have been an obstacle as a professional.

Russell (19-0, 11 knockouts) might be unrivaled in terms of natural ability and boxing skills. Of course, we'll know for sure when he steps up his opposition, which is coming soon.

"I don't duck anyone, I'm ready for whoever, whenever," Russell said. "As long as me and my team come to a mutual agreement, then I'm 100 percent down."

Among those Russell would like to face are Nonito Donaire, a three-division titleholder now campaigning as a junior featherweight, and unbeaten former featherweight belt-holder Yuriorkis Gamboa, winner of an Olympic gold medal for Cuba.

"I believe that Donaire is one of the best guys for me to compete against," Russell said. "He would give me the best competition. I honestly really don't feel as though Gamboa would be better competition than Donaire. Donaire is more technically sound than Gamboa."

Russell just wants to match prowess with one of the sport's big stars.

"I don't want to help headline another person," he said. "I want to be the main event on that card. I want all my fans to come out and support me. It would mean a lot to not just me, but to my fans as well. It's not too far down the road."

Leonilo Miranda (left) couldn't cope with what **Gary Russell Jr.** brings into the ring, much like the rest of the Prospect of the Year's opponents. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

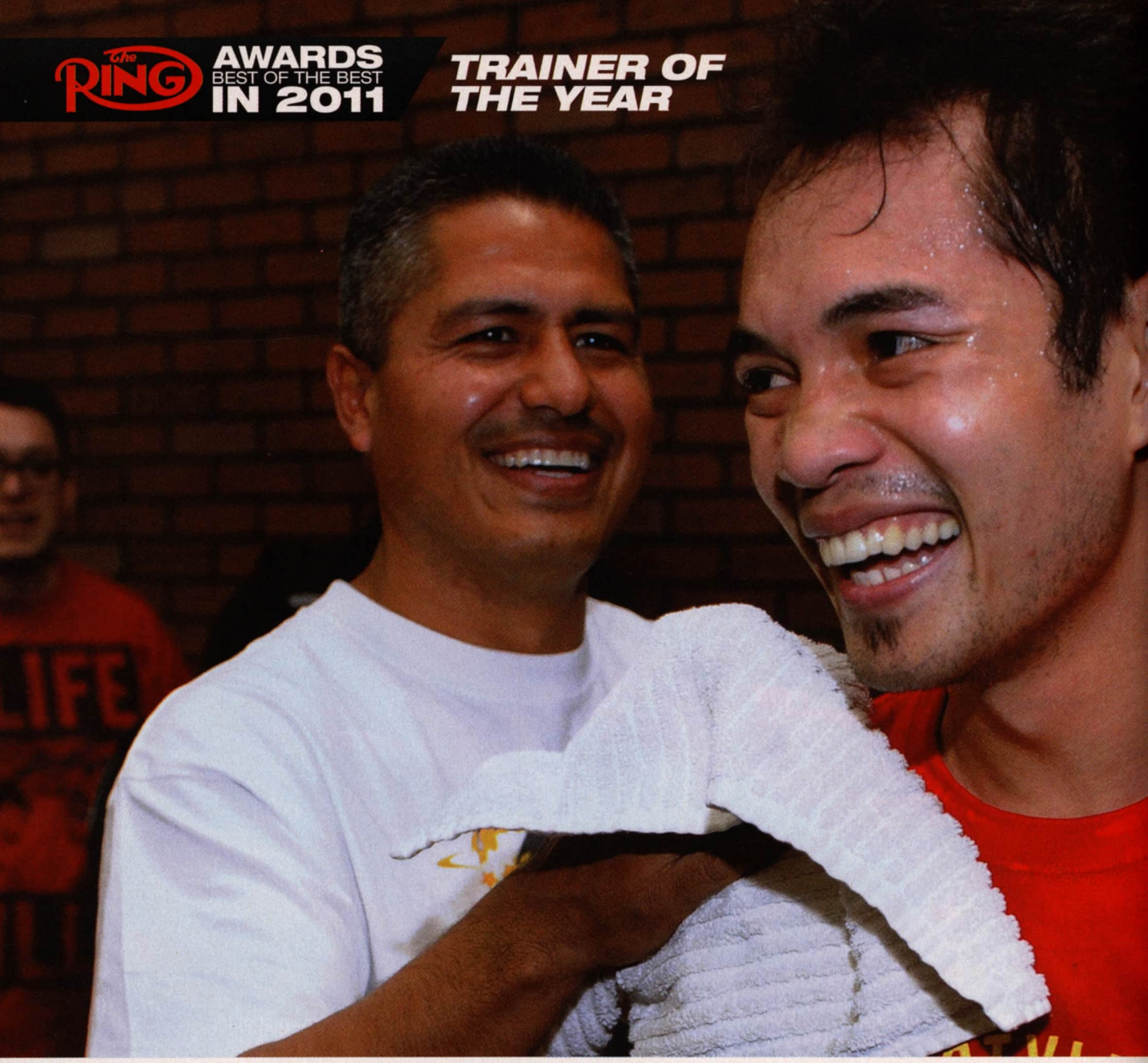
RUNNERS UP

JAVIER FORTUNA: The slick-boxing featherweight from the Dominican Republic graduated to 10-rounders last year and had a taste of a capable veteran opponent, Miguel Roman, who he easily outpointed in December. Fortuna (18-0, 13 KOs), who trains with Gabriel Sarmiento in Oxnard, Calif., was 5-0 in 2011. He's 22.

LUIS DEL VALLE: The native of Puerto Rico had a sterling amateur career competing for the United States. And nothing has changed in the professional ranks. The boxer-puncher has dominated all 15 of his opponents, including a one-sided decision over Dat Nguyen last June. Del Valle (15-0, 11 KOs) is 25.

LEO SANTA CRUZ: The only blemish on the record of the 23-year-old Mexican is a four-round draw in his second fight. Santa Cruz (19-0-1, 11 KOs) also is developing into a big puncher: He had stopped nine straight opponents at press time, including veterans Jose Lopez and Everth Briceno.

DEMETRIUS ANDRADE: The 2007 world amateur champion failed to win a medal in the 2008 Olympics but has looked like gold as a pro. The 23-year-old resident of Providence, R.I., appears to have it all – athleticism, speed, skills and power. And he is stepping up his opposition. His biggest victory probably was over Grady Brewer, who he easily outpointed in August. ■



ROBERT GARCIA

IT'S ABOUT TIME

By **Don Stradley**

It's a bit of a cliché to compare a boxing trainer to a jockey, but it sounds good enough that we'll use it one more time. The better the horse, the better the jockey looks. It's the same for boxing trainers, and in 2011, Robert Garcia had two of the best horses in the business, Brandon Rios and Nonito Donaire.

Thanks to Rios pummeling his way to wins over Miguel Acosta, Urbano Antillon and John Murray, Garcia looked like a genius in 2011. He might have found the perfect clay to mold in Rios, a relentless banger by nature. Garcia, who comes from a famous boxing family, seems to be instilling more patience and precision into Rios' style. It's been a wonderful formula so far. It's also great to see because Rios was for many years a sort of wild child, an incorrigible who seemed destined to self-destruct. Under Garcia, he seems to be settling down into the sort of fighter we'd all imagined he could be.

Trainer of the Year **Robert Garcia** (left) and **Nonito Donaire** have had a lot to be happy about.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Donaire, too, had some difficulties in the past. No, he wasn't a troublemaker like Rios, but Donaire has some well-known family dramas in his background and has gone through a few sets of trainers. At one point a few years ago, Donaire was so stressed by his career that he was already talking about leaving boxing. He sounded like a bitter fighter who had grown tired of the politics surrounding the sport. But like Rios, he seems to have settled down under Garcia's watch. In 2011 he scored what may have been a career-defining two-round knockout of Fernando Montiel to win the WBC and WBO bantamweight belts. His first title defense was an easy decision win over unbeaten 115-pound beltholder Omar Narvaez.

A former junior lightweight titlist himself, Garcia is a staple of the Oxnard California boxing community. He and his father Eduardo trained many successful fighters at La Colonia Boxing Club in Oxnard, Calif., and recently opened his own gym, the Robert Garcia Boxing Academy, in Oxnard. His younger brother, Miguel Angel "Mikey" Garcia, is one of the top young featherweights working today, and is also trained by Garcia and his dad. Brother Mikey scored wins over undefeated Matt Remillard, Rafael Guzman and Juan Carlos Martinez in 2011, improving his record to 27-0 (23 knockouts) and earning a spot in THE RING's Top 10 featherweight ratings.

Of course, it wasn't a perfect year for Garcia. For one thing, he couldn't do much for the fading Antonio Margarito. But Garcia's rep is so high right now that former middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik, trying to reignite his career, left his hometown in Ohio and made the pilgrimage to Oxnard. With some proper care and handling, even Margarito and Pavlik could win some fights for Garcia in the future.

Perhaps the best thing about Garcia is that he isn't likely to let his recent success go to his head. He responded rather dryly when he was told by a BoxingScene.com writer about the number of news outlets that were choosing him as trainer of the year.

"It doesn't make any difference to me," Garcia said. "I think my fighters are the ones who get me there. I have very great fighters, very good people around me. It's all teamwork."

We like your humility, Robert. But we hope you are a little more thrilled by being chosen as THE RING's Trainer of the Year.

RUNNERS UP

FREDDIE ROACH: The perennial trainer-of-the-year's shadow still bestrides the boxing landscape. Along with handling the most popular fighter in the world, Manny Pacquiao and popular Brit Amir Khan, Roach helped Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. blossom into a more complete fighter in 2011, guiding him to his first alphabet belt and a successful title defense.

ANN WOLFE: She has done a great job reviving the up-and-down career of James Kirkland. It would be nice to see her pick up a few other fighters, but she might be too scary to work with. Her unique methods won't work for everybody, but she and Kirkland have a good chemistry.

BARRY HUNTER: His relationship with Lamont and Anthony Peterson has been one of the great boxing stories of recent years; it was inspiring to see Lamont bang his way to a win over Khan for the WBA and IBF titles at 140.

VIRGIL HUNTER: Hunter also gets some kudos for guiding Andre Ward to the championship of Showtime's Super Six tournament. Ward and Hunter have one of those fighter/trainer relationships that are fun to watch (but not so fun to come up against). ■

AL HAYMON

POWER BROKER

By **Doug Fischer**

Few figures in boxing are as polarizing as Al Haymon.

Some hardcore fans and industry insiders believe the low-profile adviser has so much influence over networks, sanctioning organizations and even promoters that he has an unfair advantage over other managers. Haymon's critics might be right, which is why most professional boxers would love to sign with him.

It's also why the mysterious former concert promoter is THE RING's Manager of the Year.

The argument to bestow the honor on Haymon was strengthened by the fact he manages Floyd Mayweather Jr., the biggest pay-per-view attraction and money generator in the sport, but it's what he does with the rest of his stable that earns him the "power broker" reputation.

Apart from Mayweather, who won his seventh major title with a fourth-round KO of welterweight beltholder Victor Ortiz last September, Haymon manages RING-rated contenders Andre Berto, Chris Arreola, Adrien Broner and Danny Garcia. He also guides one of the sport's hottest prospects, undefeated featherweight Gary Russell Jr.

Haymon's fighters don't always win. Berto dropped a decision to Ortiz in THE RING's Fight of the Year last April. They don't always perform well, either. Some observers thought that Broner, Haymon's talented and cocky undefeated junior lightweight, was lucky to get a decision over former 122-pound beltholder Daniel Ponce de Leon last March. However, his fighters are usually featured on a major network, they are paid very well (some would say overpaid) and their careers are always being advanced.

That's what fighters want. That's what Haymon delivers.

Berto lost his WBC 147-pound title to Ortiz in a high-paying bout on HBO but he was back on the U.S. cable network, which cuts the biggest checks in the boxing business, in his very next fight against IBF beltholder Jan Zaveck. The Zaveck fight, which Berto won by fifth-round TKO, was his 10th straight bout on HBO.

Broner fought three consecutive bouts on HBO in 2011, and his opposition didn't get tougher with each outing. The De Leon fight was a reasonable step-up for a prospect of Broner's level (although some felt the Mexican veteran was too small to threaten such a large and athletic boxer), but his next fight, in June, was against Jason Litzau. Litzau had scored back-to-back upsets over Rocky Juarez and Celestino Caballero but many insiders believed the game Minnesotan to be a badly faded fighter. Broner blasted Litzau in one round.

Broner's final bout of 2011 came against Martin Rodriguez in November. Rodriguez is a rugged veteran but he's also undersized, one-dimensional and painfully slow. Broner toyed with the Argentine before knocking him out in the third round. The victory did more than thrill Broner's hometown fans in Cincinnati; it earned him the WBO's vacant 130-pound title.

Why the WBO belt was up for grabs is anyone's guess. Rodriguez doesn't own a victory over a single notable fighter. His last loss was to William Kickett, a Broner KO victim.

But that's an indication of Haymon's power, the kind of influence that takes a prospect like Russell from fighting on TeleFutura to HBO without significantly stepping up his competition.

Highlights of Russell's eight-round decision over Eric Estrada were shown during HBO's Amir Khan-Zab Judah broadcast last July. His next bout, against Leonilo Miranda, was the co-feature to the Zaveck-Berto fight. The ultra-fast southpaw outpointed the heavy handed veteran in another eight-round bout, a preliminary distance that HBO rarely showcases. But "showcase" Russell is what the network did when it televised his first-round KO of journeyman Heriberto Ruiz during the Broner-Rodriguez broadcast.

By the end of 2011, Russell was the consensus choice for Prospect of the Year among boxing media, including Haymon's most ardent critics.

Now that's influence.

RUNNERS UP

CAMERON DUNKIN: The veteran manager maneuvered undefeated WBO 140-pound titleholder Timothy Bradley to a promotional deal with Top Rank that resulted in a 2012 showdown with Manny

Manager **Al Haymon** (left, with client **Floyd Mayweather Jr.**) knows how to move a fighter. Image: **Craig Bennett**

Pacquiao. The most talented fighter in his vast stable, Nonito Donaire, exploded into the top five of most pound-for-pound lists with a second-round TKO of bantamweight beltholder Fernando Montiel last February, while his unbeaten lightweight contender Brandon Rios won the WBA title in the same month before racking up two more victories that were televised on Showtime and HBO.

BERND BOENTE: The manager of Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko continued to pack arenas and stadiums with the Germany-based Ukrainian heavyweight brothers while doing huge television ratings in Europe. Wladimir, THE RING champ, added the WBA title to his belt collection with a unanimous decision over David Haye last July. Vitali, the WBC titleholder, successfully defended his green strap with a first-round KO of Odlanier Solis last March, a 10th-round stoppage of Tomasz Adamek last September and a unanimous decision over Dereck Chisora on Feb. 18.

FRANK ESPINOZA: The Los Angeles-based manager's unbeaten bantamweight contender Abner Mares won the IBF bantamweight title by defeating Joseph Agbeko last August and successfully defended the belt against the formidable Ghanaian veteran in December. Espinoza's group of young prospects – lightweight Luis Ramos Jr., featherweights Ronny Rios and Abraham Lopez, and junior welterweight Antonio Orozco – were busy and remained undefeated in 2011. He also added former 122-pound beltholder Daniel Ponce de Leon to his growing stable. ■

DEWEY BOZELLA

A TRUE FIGHTER

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Dewey Bozella, THE RING's Most Inspirational person in boxing, is a testament to perseverance.

Image: **Bryan Crowe-Fightwireimages**

Dewey Bozella has made one thing profoundly clear: Don't let go of your dreams – no matter what.

Bozella was charged with the murder of 92-year-old Emma Crasper in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., in 1977, when Bozella was 18. He was convicted and went to Sing Sing six years later, proclaiming his innocence from the beginning but no one, including a parole board that denied him his release four times, believed him. He spent the next 26 years in prison.

Meanwhile, he was a model inmate. He earned two college degrees, among other academic accomplishments. And he became light heavyweight boxing champion at Sing Sing, the closest he could come to realizing his dream of becoming a professional fighter.

Bozella left prison in 2009 after lawyers discovered evidence suppressed by prosecutors that proved his innocence.

More than two and a half decades behind bars for a crime one didn't commit would break a strong man. It turns out Bozella is a *super* man.

He had a right to be bitter but didn't seem to hold a grudge against those responsible for his incarceration, instead choosing to educate young people about the dangers of gang life and lecture about his unusual experiences.

And, oh yeah, he had some unfinished business. Bozella was 52, an age when most fighters are well into retirement, but still was determined to live out his dream of stepping through the ropes in a packed arena to fight professionally. It happened on Oct. 15, 2011, on the Bernard Hopkins-Chad Dawson undercard. Bozella, in terrific shape, outpointed Larry Hopkins in one of the most-important four-round fights in the history of the sport.

Bozella probably will never fight again, which is OK with him.

"This was my first and last fight," he said. "It's a young man's game. I did what I want to do, and I'm happy. I appreciate everybody that made this possible. This has been one of the greatest experiences of my life."

In the process, he had a profound impact on those privy to

his story.

Bozella proved that a man can handle himself with dignity in spite of a heart-wrenching injustice imposed on him. He demonstrated uncommon resilience by surviving his ordeal and coming out whole in the end.

Most important, he personifies the power of hope. He never gave up on himself, on justice, on his dreams in spite of daunting odds. And it paid off in the end. Bozella will never get the lost years back but he'll have the admiration of millions for the time he has left.

Thus, it was a no-brainer when it came time to select THE RING's Most Inspirational Person for 2011. It's hard to top Dewey Bozella. ■

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BEST FIGHTER POLL

MAYWEATHER BACK ON TOP

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Everyone seems to agree that Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao are the two best boxers in the planet. The question is who is No. 1?

The answer, at least according to THE RING's annual Best Fighter Poll, is Mayweather.

That gives "Money" his fourth No. 1 finish and ends Pacquiao's reign at three consecutive years, although the voting by 10 boxing experts representing four countries was fairly close.

Mayweather garnered six first-place votes and 136.5 points, the .5 being the result of voter Gary Andrew Poole's decision to put both fighters at No. 1. Pacquiao had four first-place votes and 127.5 points.

No one else received a first place vote, although voter Norm Frauenheim left the top spot vacant. RING middleweight champion Sergio Martinez was a distant third with 80 points.

Mayweather finished first in the poll in three consecutive years, 2005 to 2007, after which Pacquiao went on his run.

Only Roy Jones Jr., with six No. 1 finishes, has more than Mayweather since the poll began in 1980. Marvin Hagler also finished atop the poll four times. Pacquiao and Julio Cesar Chavez are next with three No. 1 finishes each.

Six fighters – Mayweather, Pacquiao, Martinez, Andre Ward, Juan Manuel Marquez and Nonito Donaire – received a vote from every voter this year.

Two fighters – Pongsaklek Wonjongkam and Lucian Bute – made the Top 10 for the first time. Bernard Hopkins was the only fighter in last year's Top 10 who dropped out this year.

In the poll, the fighters receive points for each vote they receive: 15 points for a first-place vote, 12 for second, nine for third, seven for fourth, six for fifth, five for sixth, four for seventh, three for eighth, two for ninth and one for 10th.

THIS YEAR'S PANEL: Nick Giongco, *Manila Bulletin* (Philippines); Gary Andrew Poole, author and free-lance writer; Keith Idec, *The Record and Herald News* (Woodland Park, N.J.); Kevin Iole, Yahoo! Sports; Gunnar Meinhardt, Die Welt (Germany); Norm Frauenheim, free-lance writer; Dan Rafael, ESPN.com; Harry Pratt, *Daily Star* (United Kingdom); and Rick Reeno, BoxingScene.com.

THE POLL

THE FINAL TALLY (WITH FIRST-PLACE VOTES IN PARENTHESES).

NICK GIONGCO
Manilla Bulletin (Philippines)

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
3. Nonito Donaire
4. Sergio Martinez
5. Juan Manuel Marquez
6. Andre Ward
7. Wladimir Klitschko
8. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
9. Timothy Bradley
10. Vitali Klitschko

Pacquiao keeps his No. 1 rating even though he clearly struggled against Marquez in his last fight. One bad fight doesn't change my belief that Pacquiao is superior to Mayweather, although I won't question why others have decided to make Mayweather their top pick. If Mayweather gets rid of Cotto with ease and Pacquiao struggles against Bradley, then it would probably be a different story.

GARY ANDREW POOLE
Author, RING contributor

1. (Tie) Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Juan Manuel Marquez
5. Andre Ward
6. Nonito Donaire
7. Wladimir Klitschko
8. Timothy Bradley
9. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
10. Lucian Bute

So Mayweather and Pacquiao are the best in the world, but they have both fought virtually the same weak competition for a couple years, which is sort of like watching the New York Giants play Notre Dame University over and over. With a cheap-shot KO and a controversial decision between them, neither man has made a recent case for superiority. If you want to be called the greatest, time to fight each other and prove who is Numero Uno.

KEITH IDEC
The Record and Herald News (Woodland Park, N.J.)

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Juan Manuel Marquez
5. Andre Ward
6. Wladimir Klitschko
7. Nonito Donaire
8. Lucian Bute
9. Timothy Bradley
10. Vitali Klitschko

It'd be extremely difficult to justify placing Pacquiao in the top spot over the unbeaten Mayweather based on how close Pacquiao came to losing his third fight against Marquez on Nov. 12. Unless Miguel Cotto upsets Mayweather on May 5, Pacquiao probably will have to beat Mayweather in the ring to reclaim the top spot.

KEVIN IOLE
Yahoo! Sports

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Andre Ward
4. Nonito Donaire
5. Sergio Martinez
6. Vitali Klitschko
7. Juan Manuel Marquez
8. Timothy Bradley
9. Wladimir Klitschko
10. Miguel Cotto

I believe Mayweather is the best overall fighter, when combining offense, defense and ring generalship, since Pernell Whitaker. He's been more dominant against common opponents than Pacquiao. Andre Ward is vastly underrated in my opinion and is going to be the next long-reigning pound-for-pound fighter. And though most will rate Wladimir Klitschko ahead of Vitali, I can't get past Vitali's sheer dominance. He barely loses a 10-second stretch of a round, let alone a round.

GUNNAR MEINHARDT
Die Welt (Germany)

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Andre Ward
5. Nonito Donaire
6. Wladimir Klitschko
7. Lucian Bute
8. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
9. Vitali Klitschko
10. Juan Manuel Marquez

Pacquiao is the most exciting fighter anywhere. He has avoided no one and has shown for years now unprecedented consistency at the highest level.

NORM FRAUENHEIM
RING contributor

1. Vacant.
2. Floyd Mayweather, Jr.
3. Manny Pacquiao
4. Andre Ward
5. Sergio Martinez
6. Juan Manuel Marquez
7. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
8. Wladimir Klitschko
9. Timothy Bradley
10. Nonito Donaire

The vacant sign sits atop this piece of pound-for-pound real estate because of what hasn't happened: Floyd Mayweather Jr. versus Manny Pacquiao. Futile talks define a line in Jerry Seinfeld's old show. It's

been about nothing, despite a rare chance to settle the debate. By now, there could have been a rematch. While they talk on and on, maybe Andre Ward will have some say-so about who should fill that vacancy.

DAN RAFAEL
ESPN.com

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Juan Manuel Marquez
5. Andre Ward
6. Nonito Donaire
7. Bernard Hopkins
8. Wladimir Klitschko
9. Timothy Bradley Jr.
10. Miguel Cotto

You can argue Mayweather and Pacquiao are tied or are 1 and 1A, but I have Mayweather slightly ahead of Pacquiao. Even though Mayweather doesn't fight as regularly as Pacquiao, he dominates every time out, including against opponents they have in common. I thought it was telling that Pacquiao barely beat Juan Manuel Marquez in November while Mayweather shut out Marquez not that long ago. That was enough to give Mayweather the slight edge for the time being.

HARRY PRATT
Daily Star (United Kingdom), RING contributor

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Andre Ward
5. Nonito Donaire
6. Wladimir Klitschko
7. Juan Manuel Marquez
8. Timothy Bradley
9. Bernard Hopkins
10. Vitali Klitschko

The one-fight-a-year approach since 2009 should not detract from Mayweather's incredible career record. He has won all 42 of his fights and that gives him the right to box whenever he wants – and the edge over rival Manny Pacquiao. There is so little between the pair. Hence, the world continues to wait for a meeting. If it ever happens, we can all pass judgment without the use of record books.

RON BORGES
Boston Herald, RING contributor

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Juan Manuel Marquez
4. Sergio Martinez
5. Andre Ward
6. Nonito Donaire
7. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
8. Lucian Bute
9. Timothy Bradley
10. Chris John

Mayweather was the best when he disappeared and remains so when he reappears. All Pacquiao has to do is beat Mayweather to rise a notch.

RICK REENO
BoxingScene.com

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Juan Manuel Marquez
5. Andre Ward
6. Nonito Donaire
7. Bernard Hopkins
8. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
9. Wladimir Klitschko
10. Brian Viloria

The main obstacle that prevents me from rating Mayweather in the No. 1 spot is inactivity. He has retired at least twice in the last few years. Since 2007, he took a near two-year layoff before returning in September 2009 to dominate Juan Manuel Marquez. He came back the following May to dominate Shane Mosley, but then stepped back until September of 2011, when he knocked out Victor Ortiz in four rounds. On the other hand, Pacquiao is averaging at least two fights per year since 2007.

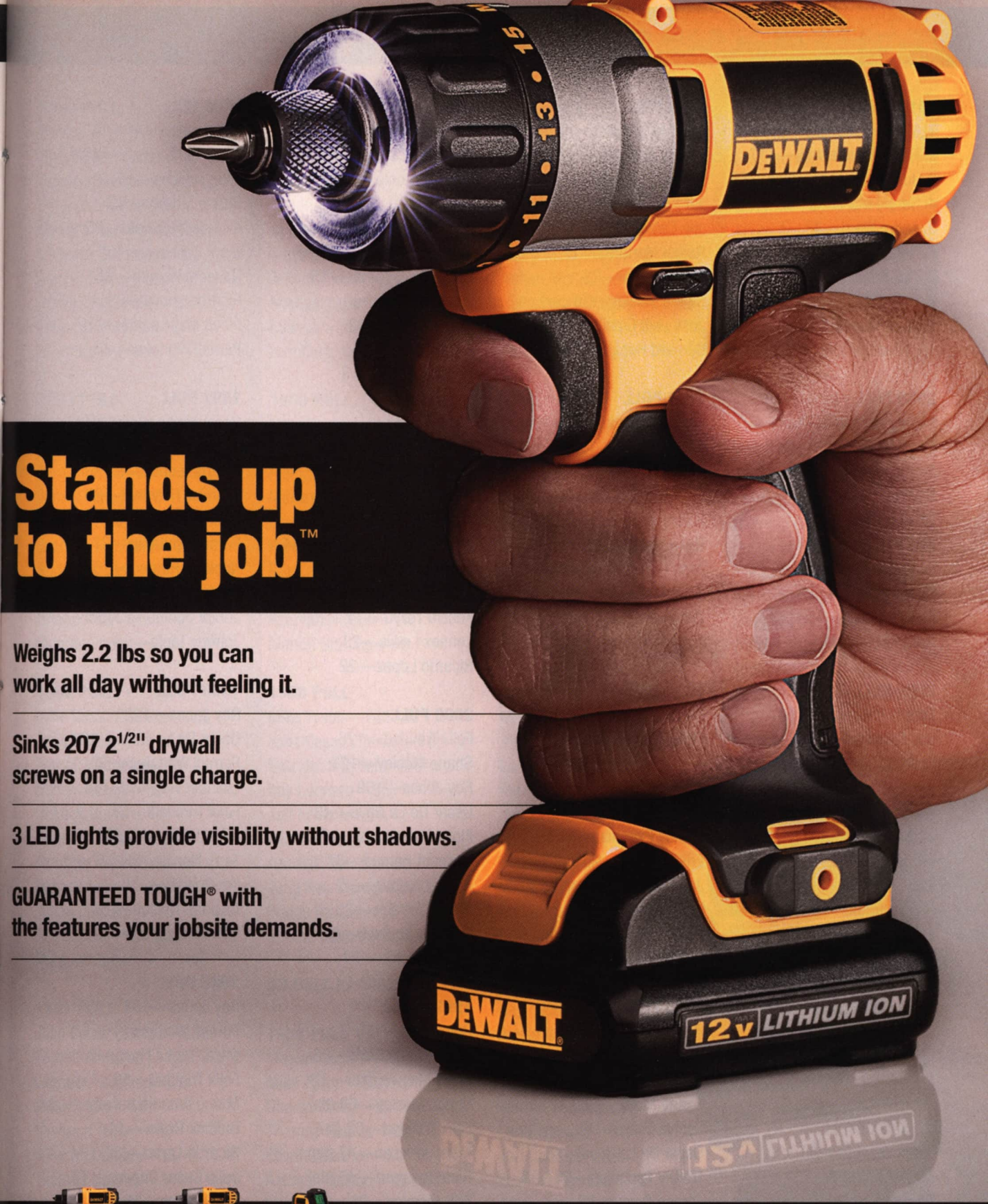
THE RESULTS

1. **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** 136.5 (6)
2. **Manny Pacquiao** 127.5 (4)
3. **Sergio Martinez** 80
4. **Andre Ward** 65
5. **Juan Manuel Marquez** 57
6. **Nonito Donaire** 53
7. **Wladimir Klitschko** 33

8T. **Timothy Bradley** 19
8T. **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam** 19
10. **Lucian Bute** 11

OTHERS RECEIVING VOTES: Bernard Hopkins 10, Vitali Klitschko 10, Miguel Cotto 2, Chris John 1 and Brian Viloria 1.

NOTE: Gary Andrew Poole had Mayweather and Pacquiao tied at No. 1, giving them both a first-place vote. Norm Frauenheim had the No. 1 position vacant.



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PAST POLLS

2010 POLL
1. Manny Pacquiao—150
2. Floyd Mayweather—117
3. Juan Manuel Marquez—76
4. Sergio Martinez—68
5. Andre Ward—48
6. Nonito Donaire—41
7. Tim Bradley—27
8. Bernard Hopkins—24
9. Juan Manuel Lopez—21
10. Wladimir Klitschko—20

2009 POLL
Manny Pacquiao—144
Floyd Mayweather—126
Shane Mosley—79
Bernard Hopkins—61
Chad Dawson—48
Paul Williams—42
Juan Manuel Marquez—40
Nonito Donaire—22
Ivan Calderon—15
Arthur Abraham—14

2008 POLL
Manny Pacquiao—150
Joe Calzaghe—101
Juan Manuel Marquez—99
Bernard Hopkins—73
Antonio Margarito—52
Israel Vazquez—50
Rafael Marquez—31
Miguel Cotto—28
Ricky Hatton—18 (tie)
Paul Williams—18 (tie)

2007 POLL
Floyd Mayweather—150
Manny Pacquiao—103
Joe Calzaghe—83
Bernard Hopkins—63
Juan Manuel Marquez—58
Miguel Cotto-51
Israel Vazquez—30
Kelly Pavlik—21
Winky Wright—15
Juan Diaz—13 (tie)
Oscar De La Hoya—13 (tie)

2006 POLL
Floyd Mayweather—141
Manny Pacquiao—129
Winky Wright—84
Jermain Taylor—61
Joe Calzaghe—49
Rafael Marquez—28
Ricky Hatton—23
Shane Mosley—20
Jose Luis Castillo—19
Bernard Hopkins—16

2005 POLL
Floyd Mayweather—144
Winky Wright—113
Marco Antonio Barrera—70
Juan Manuel Marquez—43
Rafael Marquez—39
Ricky Hatton—38
Jose Luis Castillo—36
Jermain Taylor—34
Zab Judah—31
Antonio Tarver—30

2004 POLL
Bernard Hopkins—150
Floyd Mayweather—111
Kostya Tszyu—88
Winky Wright—70
Marco Antonio Barrera—52
Manny Pacquiao—38
Erik Morales—26
Juan Manuel Marquez—25
Felix Trinidad—22
Diego Corrales—11 (tie)
Rafael Marquez –11 (tie)

2003 POLL
Roy Jones—142
Bernard Hopkins—114
Floyd Mayweather—97
Shane Mosley—53
Kostya Tszyu—48
Oscar De La Hoya—45
Manny Pacquiao—38
James Toney—35
Erik Moraels—31
Lennox Lewis—22

2002 POLL
Roy Jones—135
Oscar De La Hoya—89
Marco Antonio Barrera—78 (tie)
Vernon Forrest—78 (tie)
Bernard Hopkins—78 (tie)
Floyd Mayweather—45
Lennox Lewis—43
Kostya Tszyu—42
Erik Morales—25
Shane Mosley—13

2001 POLL
Shane Mosley—132
Roy Jones—108
Bernard Hopkins—98
Floyd Mayweather—77
Marco Antonio Barrera—44
Oscar De La Hoya—40
Felix Trinidad—39
Kostya Tszyu—34
Lennox Lewis—23
Ricardo Lopez—22

2000 POLL
Felix Trinidad—126
Shane Mosley—123
Roy Jones—109
Oscar De La Hoya—43
Floyd Mayweather—39
Naseem Hamed—37
Ricardo Lopez—35
Diego Corrales—33
Bernard Hopkins—32
Lennox Lewis—31

1999 POLL
Roy Jones—150
Oscar De La Hoya—85
Floyd Mayweather—78
Shane Mosley—68 (tie)
Felix Trinidad—68 (tie)
Mark Johnson—47 (tie)
Ricardo Lopez—47 (tie)
Erik Morales—21
Bernard Hopkins—16
Fernando Vargas—15

1998 POLL
Roy Jones—141
Oscar De La Hoya—123
Felix Trinidad—67
Shane Mosley—65
Evander Holyfield—55
Mark Johnson—45
Naseem Hamed—33
Ricardo Lopez—23
Floyd Mayweather—19
Pernell Whitaker—14

1997 POLL
Oscar De La Hoya—123
Roy Jones—117
Ricardo Lopez—83
Evander Holyfield—80
Felix Trinidad—65
Pernell Whitaker—37
Naseem Hamed—28
Mark Johnson—22 (tie)
Junior Jones—22 (tie)
Johnny Tapia—18

1996 POLL
Roy Jones—123
Oscar De La Hoya—107
Pernell Whitaker—92
Evander Holyfield—64
Felix Trinidad—59
Ricardo Lopez—56
Terry Norris—28
Ike Quartey—21
Azumah Nelson—12
Yuri Arbachakov—11

1995 POLL
Roy Jones—138
Pernell Whitaker—126
Oscar De La Hoya—74
Felix Trinidad—59
Marco Antonio Barrera—48
Riddick Bowe—44
Ricardo Lopez—37
Julio Cesar Chavez—18
Ike Quartey—16
Naseem Hamed—12

1994 POLL
Pernell Whitaker—130
Roy Jones—129
Frankie Randall—53
Ricardo Lopez—45
Olrando Canizales—39
Chiquita Gonzalez—38
James Toney—36
Gerald McClellan—33
Felix Trinidad –29
Kevin Kelley—28

1993 POLL
Pernell Whitaker—147
Julio Cesar Chavez—86
Terry Norris—84
James Toney—76
Michael Carbajal—39
Evander Holyfield—36
Buddy McGirt—28
Roy Jones—23
Orlando Canizales—22
Ricardo Lopez—21

1992 POLL
Julio Cesar Chavez—136
Terry Norris—91
Pernell Whitaker—85
Buddy McGirt—60
Riddick Bowe—45
Orlando Canizales—36
Azumah Nelson –34
Lennox Lewis—24
Julian Jackson—18
Roy Jones—15 (tie)
Mike McCallum—15 (tie)

1991 POLL
Julio Cesar Chavez—138
Pernell Whitaker—100
Evander Holyfield—78
Mike Tyson—55
Meldrick Taylor—48
Mike McCallum—38
Thomas Hearns—34
Khaosai Galaxy—25
Terry Norris—22
Simon Brown—21

1990 POLL
Julio Cesar Chavez—123
Pernell Whitaker—104
Mike Tyson—71
Meldrick Taylor—57
Buster Douglas—51
Simon Brown—27
Antonio Esparragoza—25
Michael Nunn—23
Evander Holyfield—21
Humberto Gonzalez—14

1989 POLL
Mike Tyson—147
Julio Cesar Chavez—91
Meldrick Taylor—61
Michael Nunn—60
Evander Holyfield—56
Pernell Whitaker—46
Ray Leonard—28
Jeff Fenech—27
Azumah Nelson—18
Marlon Starling—16

1988 POLL
Mike Tyson—144
Julio Cesar Chavez—118
Evander Holyfield—66
Ray Leonard—55
Jeff Fenech—44
Michael Nunn—33
Azumah Nelson—32
Jung Koo Chang—23
Buddy McGirt—21
Sumbu Kalambay—18

NO POLL IN 1987

1986 POLL
Marvin Hagler—138
Mike Tyson—92
Donald Curry—59
Thomas Hearns—52
Edwin Rosario—47
Azumah Nelson—45 (tie)
Michael Spinks –45 (tie)
Evander Holyfield—32
Julio Cesar Chavez—26
Hector Camacho—22

1985 POLL
Marvin Hagler—150
Hector Camacho—86
Michael Spinks –85
Donald Curry—78
Thomas Hearns—42
Barry McGuigan—32
Milton McCrory—25
Julio Cesar Chavez—22 (tie)
Pinklon Thomas—22 (tie)
Larry Holmes—21

1984 POLL
Marvin Hagler—112
Aaron Pryor—77
Larry Holmes –72
Eusebio Pedroza—66
Hector Camacho—50
Jeff Chandler—47 (tie)
Ray Leonard—47 (tie)
Michael Spinks—45
Thomas Hearns—34
Donald Curry—26

1983 POLL
Marvin Hagler—147
Aaron Pryor—93
Larry Holmes—91
Michael Spinks –66
Jeff Chandler—57
Thomas Hearns—45
Alexis Arguello—29
Wilfredo Gomez—28
Hector Camacho—24
Eusebio Pedroza—12

1982 POLL
Ray Leonard—147
Alexis Arguello—97
Marvin Hagler—76
Salvador Sanchez—72
Wilfred Benitez—68
Larry Holmes—61
Jeff Chandler—25
Eusebio Pedroza—18
Aaron Pryor—17
Thomas Hearns—14 (tie)
Dwight Muhammad Qawi—14 (tie)

1981 POLL
Thomas Hearns—116
Ray Leonard—108
Marvin Hagler –76
Larry Holmes—75
Alexis Arguello—62
Wilfredo Gomez—58
Eddie Mustafa Muhammad –28
Matthew Saad Muhammad—24
Wilfred Benitez –18
Roberto Duran—13 (tie)
Aaron Pryor—13 (tie)

1980 POLL
Roberto Duran –96
Ray Leonard—93
Wilfredo Gomez—88
Danny Lopez—65
Pipino Cuevas –54
Alexis Arguello—40
Larry Holmes—32
Wilfred Benitez—26
Vito Antuofermo—25 (tie)
Matthew Saad Muhammad —25 (tie)

THE 33RD ANNUAL

HIGHLY UNOFFICIAL AWARDS

Anne Sophie Mathis (right, against **Holly Holm**) went 5-0 in 2011 to earn Best Female Fighter honors. Image: **Cris Cozzone**

By: **Don Stradley**

BEST FEMALE FIGHTER
Anne Sophie Mathis

BEST FEMALE FIGHT
Jackie Nava D10 Ana Maria Torres

MOST EXCITING DIVISION
Super Middleweight

MOST BORING DIVISION
Heavyweight

DIVISION WITH MOST POTENTIAL
Junior Welterweight

DIVISION WITH LEAST POTENTIAL
Junior Bantamweight

FUTURE CHAMPION TROPHY
Mike Jones

INSPIRATIONAL FIGHTER OF THE YEAR
Christy Martin

CROSSROADS FIGHT OF THE YEAR
Miguel Cotto-Antonio Margarito II

MOST IMPROVED
The Showtime Championship Boxing announcing team of Al Bernstein, Gus Johnson and Antonio Tarver

GENE TUNNEY DISTINGUISHED CHAMPION AWARD
Sergio Martinez

COUNT DRACULA CRIMSON BLOODBATH
Sharif Bogere UD 10 Ray Beltran Jr.

GROSS MISMATCHES OF THE YEAR
Juan Manuel Marquez KO 1 Likar Ramos;
Guillermo Jones KO 6 Mike Marrone;
Austin Trout KO 6 Frank LoPorto;
Anthony Dirrell KO 2 Kevin Engel;
Mikkel Kessler KO 6 Mehdi Bouadla

WORST REFEREE
Russell Mora

COMEDY ON TV GOLDEN GIGGLES AWARD
Larry Merchant saying he wished he was younger so he could kick Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s ass.

BILLY GRAHAM-JOEY GIARDELLO HIGHWAY ROBBERY AWARD
Paul Williams MD 12 Erislandy Lara

MUHAMMAD ALI "HOW TO LOSE WITH CLASS" AWARD
Carl Froch

ROCKY BALBOA GUTSIEST EFFORT AWARD
Pawel Wolak

JOE BUGNER JUST GLAD TO BE HERE AWARD
Omar Narvaez

JAKE LAMOTTA CAST IRON CHIN ANVIL
Pawel Wolak

THE DAVE TIBERI DISAPPEARING FIGHTER AWARD
Ali Funeka, Sakio Bika

ARCHIE MOORE OLD MAN RIVER ROCKING CHAIR
Antonio Tarver

SLAPSIE MAXIE ROSENBLOOM FEATHERFISTS AWARD
Antonio Margarito

MUHAMMAD ALI TIME TO RETIRE PENSION CHECK
Joel Casamayor, Peter Manfredo

TONY AYALA JR. WASTED TALENT TROPHY
Paul Spadafora

RAY LEONARD-ROBERTO DURAN III DISAPPOINTING FIGHT OF THE YEAR AWARD
Wladimir Klitschko-David Haye; Timothy Bradley-Devon Alexander

THE EDER JOFRE "BEST FIGHTER YOU'VE NEVER SEEN" TROPHY
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam

NEVER IN A BAD FIGHT PURPLE HEART
Miguel Cotto, Brandon Rios

RIDDICK BOWE ACHING BALLS AWARD
Joseph Agbeko

JOE LOUIS "I DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT" AWARD
Roy Jones; Evander Holyfield

MIKE TYSON "HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN" AWARD
Antonio Margarito, Paul Williams, Vic Darchinyan, Sam Peter

FIGHT YOU WON'T ADMIT YOU WANT TO SEE
Ricardo Mayorga-Antonio Margarito

LINDSAY LOHAN PAIN IN THE ASS AWARD
Floyd Mayweather Jr.

KEN NORTON "CAN'T GET A BREAK ON THE SCORECARDS" AWARD
Juan Manuel Marquez, Lucas Matthysse

RIP-OFF-THE-PUBLIC NON-EFFORT OF THE YEAR
David Haye

EDISON MIRANDA "WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?" AWARD
David Lemieux

OLIVER MCCALL "DO YOU WANT TO FIGHT OR NOT?" AWARD
Kelly Pavlik

MOST LIKELY TO STAR IN MACHETE III
Antonio Margarito, Alfredo Angulo

FRANK SINATRA "FLYING HIGH IN APRIL, SHOT DOWN IN MAY" AWARD
Victor Ortiz

JOHN RUIZ "HOW LITTLE WE MISS YOU" AWARD
Laila Ali

THE CINDERELLA MAN MIDNIGHT PUMPKIN
Kaizer Mabuza

CHARLIE SHEEN "YOU WERE FUN FOR A WHILE, NOW SHUT UP" AWARD
Floyd Mayweather Sr.

BELONGS IN A BOY BAND
Thomas Oosthuizen, George Groves, Saul Alvarez, Antonio DeMarco

BUNDINI BROWN WANNABE AWARD
50 Cent

MARCEL CERDAN FANCY BOY AWARD
Lucian Bute

JUAN MANUEL JOSE LUIS JULIO CESAR OVERUSED NAME AWARD
Any fighter named Molina

JERRY LEWIS HUGE IN EUROPE AWARD
Marco Huck

SONNY LISTON "DON'T MEET ME IN A DARK ALLEY" SILVER TRASH CAN
Tavoris Cloud, Ann Wolfe

EMILE GRIFFITH "STEADY IF UNSPECTACULAR" TROPHY
Timothy Bradley

Joseph Agbeko won a dubious award for 2011. Image: **Chris Cozzone**

NASEEM HAMED "WHY AREN'T I MORE POPULAR?" BREATH MINT
Chad Dawson

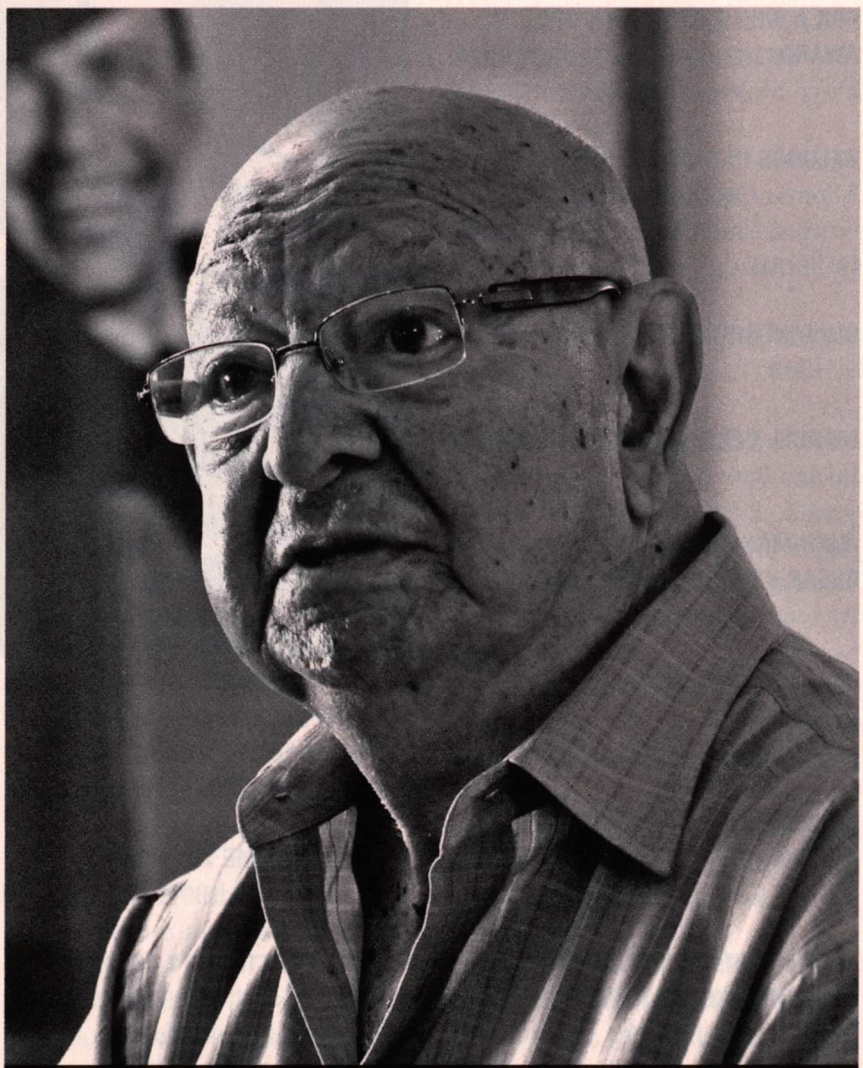
MOST FUN NAME TO PRONOUNCE
Akifumi Shimoda

FACIAL MONSTROSITY OF THE YEAR
Golden Enswell
Pawel Wolak/Erik Morales

ANGELO DUNDEE

BOXING'S WILL ROGERS: 1921-2012

By **Bernard Fernandez**



Angelo Dundee was the chairman of the board among boxing trainers. Image: **Jeff Julian**

Will Rogers was only 55 when he died in a crash of a small airplane in Alaska on Aug. 15, 1935. But the man who at various times in his life was a cowboy, humorist, vaudeville performer, social commentator, politician and motion picture actor was one of the best-liked and most-admired persons in America during his time in the public eye because of his unflagging optimism and penchant for wry observations.

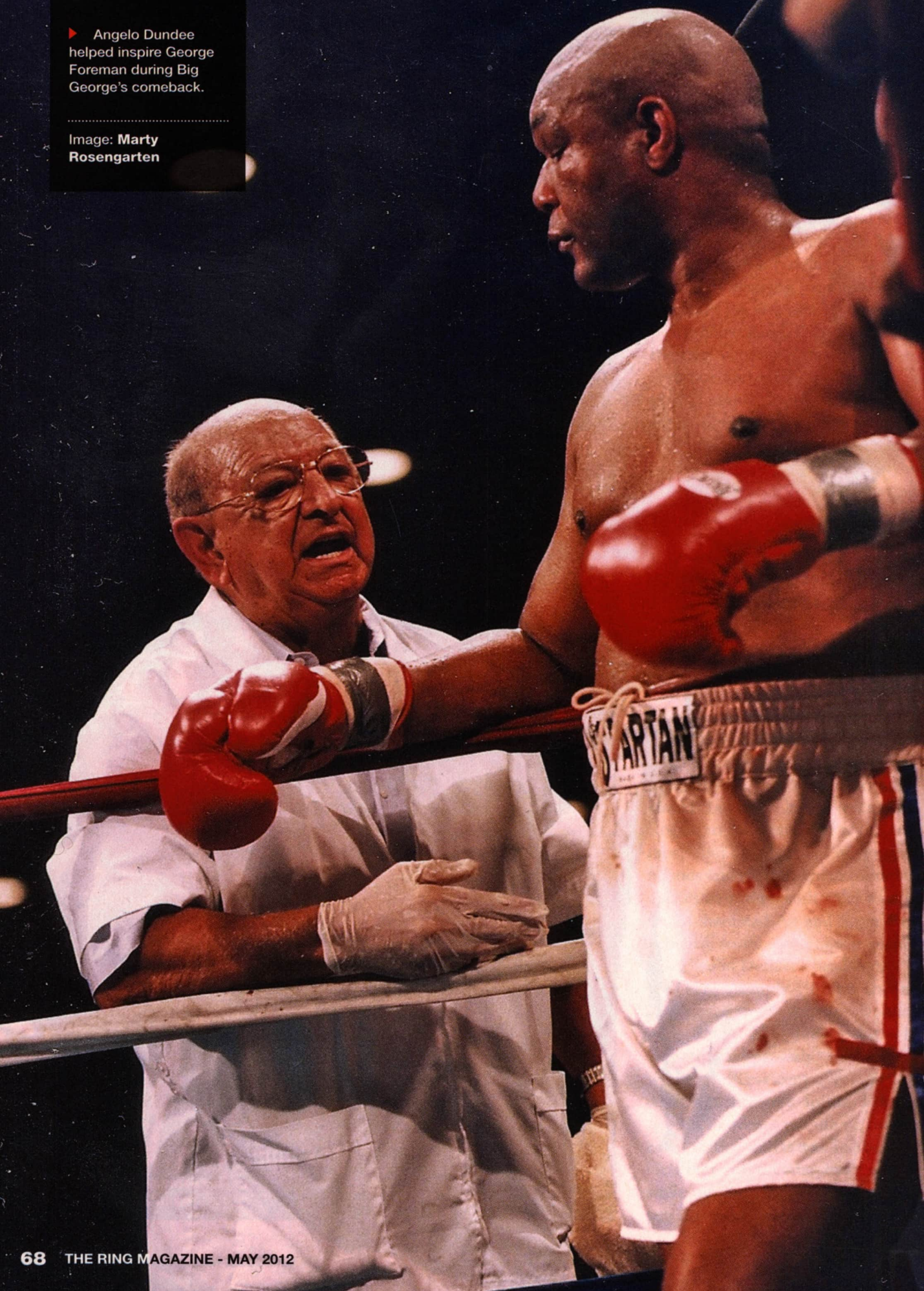
Perhaps Rogers' most famous epigram concerned his belief that everyone had some good in him, or at least enough positive aspects for a keen-eyed observer to spot them if he looked closely enough. "When I die, my epitaph, or whatever you call those signs on gravestones, is going to read, 'I joked about every prominent man of my time, but I never met a man I didn't like,'" Rogers once wrote. "I am so proud of that, I can hardly wait to die so it can be carved."

Angelo Dundee, the Hall of Fame boxing trainer who was 90 when he died on Feb. 1 in Oldsmar, Fla., might or might not have met someone he didn't like. Lord knows, there are more than a few people walking around who are so obnoxious it would be difficult for even Will Rogers to take much of a shine to them. But a variation of Rogers' famous take on the human condition applies to the pixieish chief second for Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard, so much so that it *should* be etched in Dundee's headstone.

There simply isn't anyone who ever met Angelo Dundee who didn't like him, a lot. He was the perpetually cheery guy whose effervescent personality could lift anyone's spirits. Engage Angelo in even a minute or two of conversation and it was an absolute lock that you'd come away with a smile on your face and a bit more pep in your step, even if you'd

Angelo Dundee (right) and Muhammad Ali made a hell of a team.

Image: **THE RING**



Angelo Dundee helped inspire George Foreman during Big George's comeback.

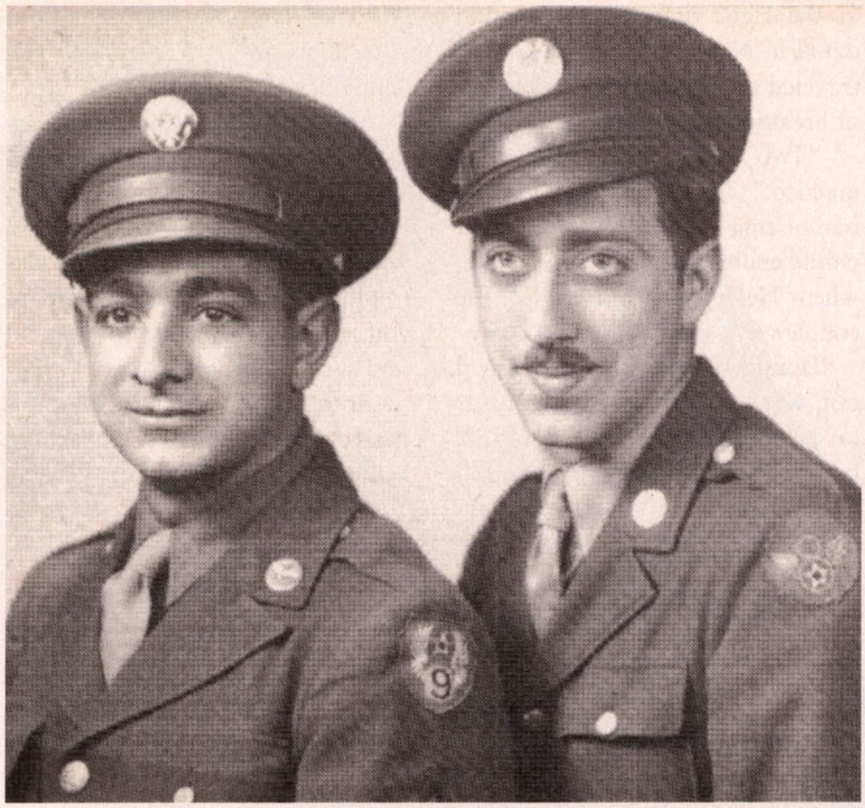
Image: **Marty Rosengarten**

if you'd never met him before. It was a rare gift that stamped him as special, maybe even more so than his ability to coax winning performances out of his fighters. And make no mistake, Dundee's Hall of Fame credentials are legitimate; Ali and Leonard were only two of the 15 world champions to have benefited from Dundee's expertise and genial manner, a list of ring greats that also included Carmen Basilio, Jose Napoles, Willie Pastrano, Ralph Dupas and, deep into his career, George Foreman.

"Angelo touched so many people," said Ed Brophy, executive director of the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, N.Y., which inducted Dundee in 1992, the IBHOF's second year of existence, and welcomed him back on a nearly yearly basis thereafter. "He was truly a goodwill ambassador for the sport of boxing. He was filled with enthusiasm for the sport, and for life in general. Being around him would just energize you. When I hung up the phone after our last conversation, I know I felt 10 feet tall. And he had that effect on just about everyone."

While Brophy is probably correct, that the spirit of Angelo Dundee will continue to live on for years to come, the harsh reality of his absence will be evident from June 7-10 at the IBHOF's 23rd Induction Weekend. Fans who have made the annual pilgrimage to the picturesque central New York hamlet won't have Angelo to spread his special brand of sunshine. They won't get to see him embrace and talk over old times with new inductee Thomas Hearns, whose Sept. 16, 1981 fight with Leonard was one of the most-anticipated matchups of all time.

"I'm no big deal," the humble and self-deprecating Dundee would frequently say of his participation in some of boxing's most memorable moments. It was almost as if he considered himself something of a real-life Forrest Gump, a fortunate but ordinary individual who somehow managed to be in the right place at the right time for all that history-making.



Angelo Dundee (left) and **Marty Weill** (manager Al Weill's son) took a break in London during World War II. Image: **THE RING**

To a certain extent, that was at least partially true. Angelo – who was christened as Angelo Mirena when he came into this world on Aug. 30, 1921, in South Philadelphia – was a master of taking advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves to him with astounding regularity. But there is a saying that winners make their own luck, and maybe the chain of events that led to Dundee's becoming a celebrated international figure in his own right would never have gathered momentum had there been a misstep early in his career.

"As a kid growing up in Philly, I never traveled further than Atlantic City," Dundee said upon his notification in January 1992 that he'd been selected for induction into the IBHOF. "Never had a car. Nobody in the neighborhood had a car back then."

America's entry into World War II greatly expanded Dundee's worldview. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps, took up boxing in basic training and served in England, France, Belgium and Germany. Upon his release from the service in 1946, he returned home before heading up to New York in '48, where his older brother, Chris, was a boxing manager and promoter.

Chris Dundee moved to Miami Beach in 1950 and Angelo, by now a full-time trainer – he'd learned his craft from the wizened likes of Ray Arcel, Charlie Goldman and Chickie Ferrara, among others, while in New York – followed in 1952. As was to prove the case so often in subsequent years, Angelo found himself in the right place at the right time. A girl he had dated

at the right time. A girl he had dated in New York, Helen Bolton, traveled to Florida with the intent of breaking off the relationship.

"Two days later we were married," Angelo said, happily reminiscing about a union that would endure until December 2010, when Helen, the mother of the couple's five children, passed away.

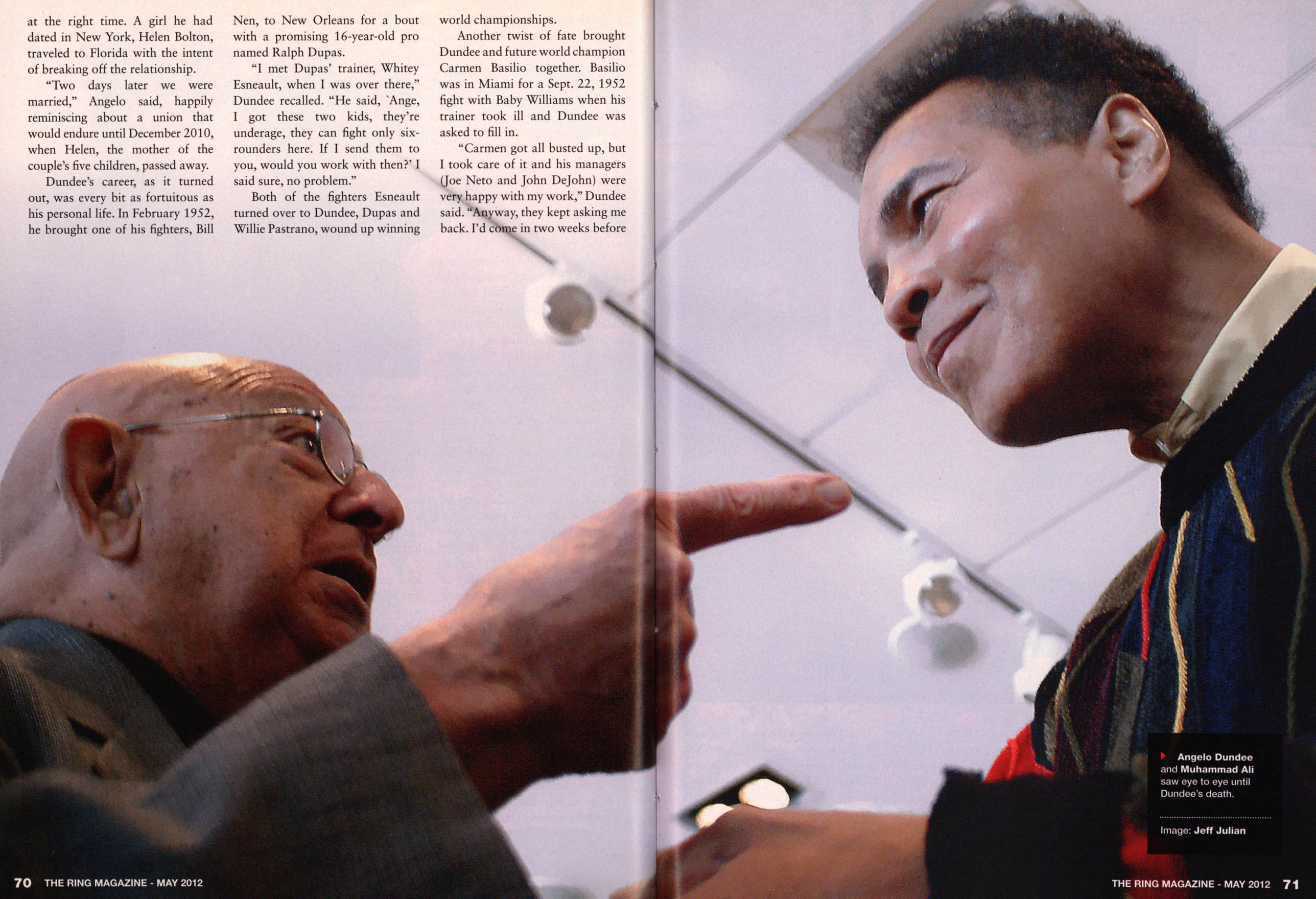
Dundee's career, as it turned out, was every bit as fortuitous as his personal life. In February 1952, he brought one of his fighters, Bill Nen, to New Orleans for a bout with a promising 16-year-old pro named Ralph Dupas.

"I met Dupas' trainer, Whitey Esneault, when I was over there," Dundee recalled. "He said, `Ange, I got these two kids, they're underage, they can fight only six-rounders here. If I send them to you, would you work with then?' I said sure, no problem."

Both of the fighters Esneault turned over to Dundee, Dupas and Willie Pastrano, wound up winning world championships.

Another twist of fate brought Dundee and future world champion Carmen Basilio together. Basilio was in Miami for a Sept. 22, 1952 fight with Baby Williams when his trainer took ill and Dundee was asked to fill in.

"Carmen got all busted up, but I took care of it and his managers (Joe Neto and John DeJohn) were very happy with my work," Dundee said. "Anyway, they kept asking me back. I'd come in two weeks before



Angelo Dundee and **Muhammad Ali** saw eye to eye until Dundee's death.

Image: **Jeff Julian**

Muhammad Ali and wife Lonnie (pictured speaking at right) made the trip to Clearwater, Fla., to say goodbye to their friend.

Images: **Jeff Julian**

a fight to calm Carmen down, take him to church, tell him jokes."

Dundee was in the corner on Sept. 23, 1957, when Basilio, a two-time welterweight champion, won the middleweight title on a 15-round decision over the great Sugar Ray Robinson in Madison Square Garden. "What a great night that was," Dundee said. "I remember thinking, `Man, it can't possibly get any better than this.'"

Except, of course, that it did. Dundee became the best-known cornerman in boxing through his association with Ali, the brash gold-medal winner from the 1960 Rome Olympics who went on to win the heavyweight title three times and everlasting fame as "The Greatest."

And when Ali was nearing the end of the line, Dundee hit it big again with another Olympic hero, Leonard. "What a ride I had with

those guys," Dundee said.

But Ange was not just a passenger; he helped chart the course of legend. In the foreward to Dundee's autobiography, My View From The Corner: A Life in Boxing, co-authored with Bert Randolph Sugar, Ali praised Angelo for letting him "be exactly who I wanted to be, and he was loyal. That is the reason I love Angelo."

Ali's endorsement of Dundee was enough for Leonard, the breakout boxing star at the 1976 Montreal Olympics, to also entrust his professional development to the little guy who knew what buttons to push, and when.

"I was told to get Angelo Dundee, and that was through the advice of Muhammad Ali," Leonard said in an interview with National Public Radio. "And from Day 1, I knew I had made the right choice."

Leonard recalled his epic welterweight unification fight with Hearns, who was ahead on the scorecards through 12 rounds of the scheduled 15-rounder.

"I was totally spent," Leonard said. "I mean, it was over 100 degrees in that ring, and you're so exhausted. Your legs, your lungs, everything's burning and on fire. At that point, most guys would quit. And Angelo said, `You're blowing it, son. You're blowing it,' which made me just get up there and try one more time. And with that little boost of confidence, I won the title."

Most obituary-type tributes to deceased dignitaries would at this time include a message for them to rest in peace. But that wasn't Angelo Dundee's style; he's no doubt inside the pearly gates right now, chatting up Saint Peter or even the Big Guy himself, telling riveting stories of fights won and bringing smiles to celestial faces. ■

ANGELO DUNDEE

By: **Doug Fischer**

Note: Dundee, who died on Feb. 1, spoke to RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer in 2010.

The late Angelo Dundee is known best for his work with Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard. He regarded the other talented fighters he trained as highly as he did his biggest stars, though.

That became obvious when Dundee agreed to divulge the best he trained in 10 key categories during his hall-of-fame career, which spanned a remarkable six decades.

Ali and Leonard figured prominently, of course. But so did protégés Luis Rodriguez and Willie Pastrano. Even the hard-punching Florentino Fernandez was mentioned.

Here are the best Dundee trained.

BEST OVERALL FIGHTER:

MUHAMMAD ALI – Muhammad had it all: natural talent, unbelievable speed and reflexes for a big man, skills, smarts, courage, you name it, he had it. But it was the uniqueness of his style and his personality that made him special. He was the first big man that moved. He was the first superstar that talked. There's only one Ali. He changed the concept of boxing.

BEST BOXER: (THREE-WAY TIE)

SUGAR RAY LEONARD, WILLIE PASTRANO AND LUIS RODRIGUEZ – It's hard for me to pick one out of those three. I trained so many good boxers. I love boxers because they hang around the sport longer than brawlers. Ray was as complete a boxer as I ever saw. Willie was special because he didn't have the power that my other boxers had. He was a pure boxer. He relied on footwork, timing and guts. He out-boxed a great fighter when he beat Harold Johnson to win the light heavyweight title. Nobody thought he could do it. Pastrano out-boxed heavyweights who outweighed him by 20 pounds, and he had no punch! Rodriguez, in my opinion, is one of the most-underrated boxers ever. He doesn't get enough credit for how good he was and for who he beat. He had the misfortune of being a welterweight at the same time Emile Griffith was in that weight class. They fought four times and Luis lost three of them, all by split decision, but I thought my guy won every one of those losses. The sad thing is that the one time he beat Griffith, which was for the title, he didn't really get any attention. Featherweight champ Davey Moore, who was knocked out by Sugar Ramos on that card in Los Angeles, fell into a coma and later died. That sad news overshadowed what should have been Luis' shining moment. He was a magnificent fighter. He fought the toughest middleweights out there at the time and outclassed most of them. He played with (Rubin) "Hurricane" Carter. It broke my heart that Luis never got his due.

BEST PUNCHER:

FLORENTINO FERNANDEZ – I love boxers but I've trained some bangers in my time. (Former heavyweight titleholder) Pinklon Thomas could whack, but nobody could punch like Fernandez. He was the best puncher out of Cuba. He was a converted southpaw so his left hook was murder. He broke Gene Fullmer's forearm with a left hook during their middleweight title fight. He could hurt anyone with any kind of punch no matter where it landed.

QUICKEST HANDS:

RODRIGUEZ – This surprises people. Everyone thinks it's either Ray or Muhammad, and those two were fast. Don't get me wrong. Speed was their bread and butter. Ray had the fastest combinations of all my fighters. Muhammad had a fast one-two. But the quickest hands belonged to Luis. He could hit you over and over again with a jab that you didn't expect to get hit with. He was fast but also nimble and graceful. And it was effortless. Sometimes that speed made things too easy for him and he would get cocky with bigger guys. He did that with Nino Benvenuti, who he fought in Italy for the middleweight title. He won 10 straight rounds, just by sticking and moving, and then he comes back to the corner after the 10th round and tells me "I'm going to knock this guy out." I tell him "No, take it easy, keep doing what you're doing." But he goes out and gets hit with a perfect left hook that drops him like a sack of bricks. The referee stands over him and starts counting to 10 as fast as he can. I yelled at him: "What's the rush!? You could count to 100 and it wouldn't make a difference. My guy's out." Poor Luis.

QUICKEST FEET: (TIE)

LEONARD AND PASTRANO. – Ray's feet were quick in a way that he could shift position or change angles when on the inside in the blink of an eye. Most of his opponents couldn't handle the way he moved those feet of his. Pastrano's feet were fast in a different way. He was usually able

to get in and out of range without getting hit but he also made his opponents move out of position by the way he moved his feet. He could feint you out of your jockstrap with his footwork! I'd have to say Willie had the most educated footwork of the fighters I've trained. He used to bounce on his toes so much I called him the pogo stick, but he didn't have herky-jerky movement. His rhythm was good.

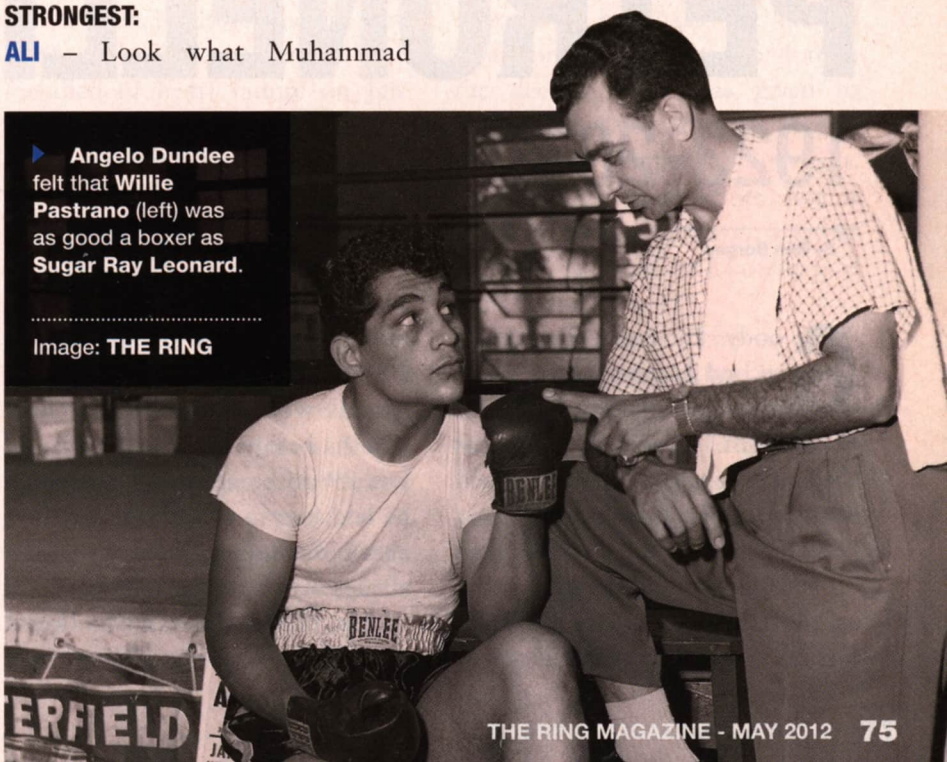
BEST DEFENSE: (FOUR-WAY TIE)
RODRIGUEZ, PASTRANO, ALI AND LEONARD – This is a tough one. All of my guys learned defense and they all had their own ways to go about protecting themselves in the ring. Rodriguez kept his hands up and he had this constant bouncy head movement that made guys miss just by an inch or two. He didn't have to duck or move around much to make a guy miss. He also blocked punches well with his gloves. Pastrano avoided trouble with his footwork and by constantly shifting his shoulders. His upper body was always moving to one angle or the other. In their prime, Ali and Leonard had the kind of reflexes that made them untouchable. Ray could get out of the way of another guy's punch before he let it go. Ali would lean away from punches, usually with his hands down by his waist. But when he was young, he was hardly touched.

BEST CHIN:
ALI – Muhammad took a great shot. Look at all the punchers he was in with, especially when he was older: (Joe) Frazier, (George) Foreman, (Earnie) Shavers. I wasn't proud of the fact that he could take a big punch because he used to be able to avoid those shots. Believe me, I liked it better when we didn't know if he could take a punch. Of course, I had a feeling he would be the tough son of a gun he turned out to be. Part of his ability to take a shot was his heart. I knew he had that when he got caught against Sonny Banks early in his career. Sonny hit him with a left hook in the first round that was so hard and on the money that Muhammad was out cold on his way down. He woke up when he hit the canvas and got up to drop Sonny in the next round and then stop him a few rounds later. That's when I knew I had a great fighter.

BEST JAB: (THREE-WAY TIE)
RODRIGUEZ, ALI, LEONARD – This is another tough one. I was lucky to train so many good boxers who could jab. I taught the jab as boxing's most important punch but these three already had good jabs before they came to train with me. When I think about it, all of my guys had good jabs. It was Pastrano's main punch. Pinklon Thomas had a good left stick. He gave Mike Tyson trouble with his jab when Tyson was at his best. But the best jabs of the guys I trained belonged to Luis, Ray and Muhammad. Ray had a great jab. Muhammad's was a thing of beauty. Luis' jab was smooth but tricky. These guys could dominate fights with their jabs.

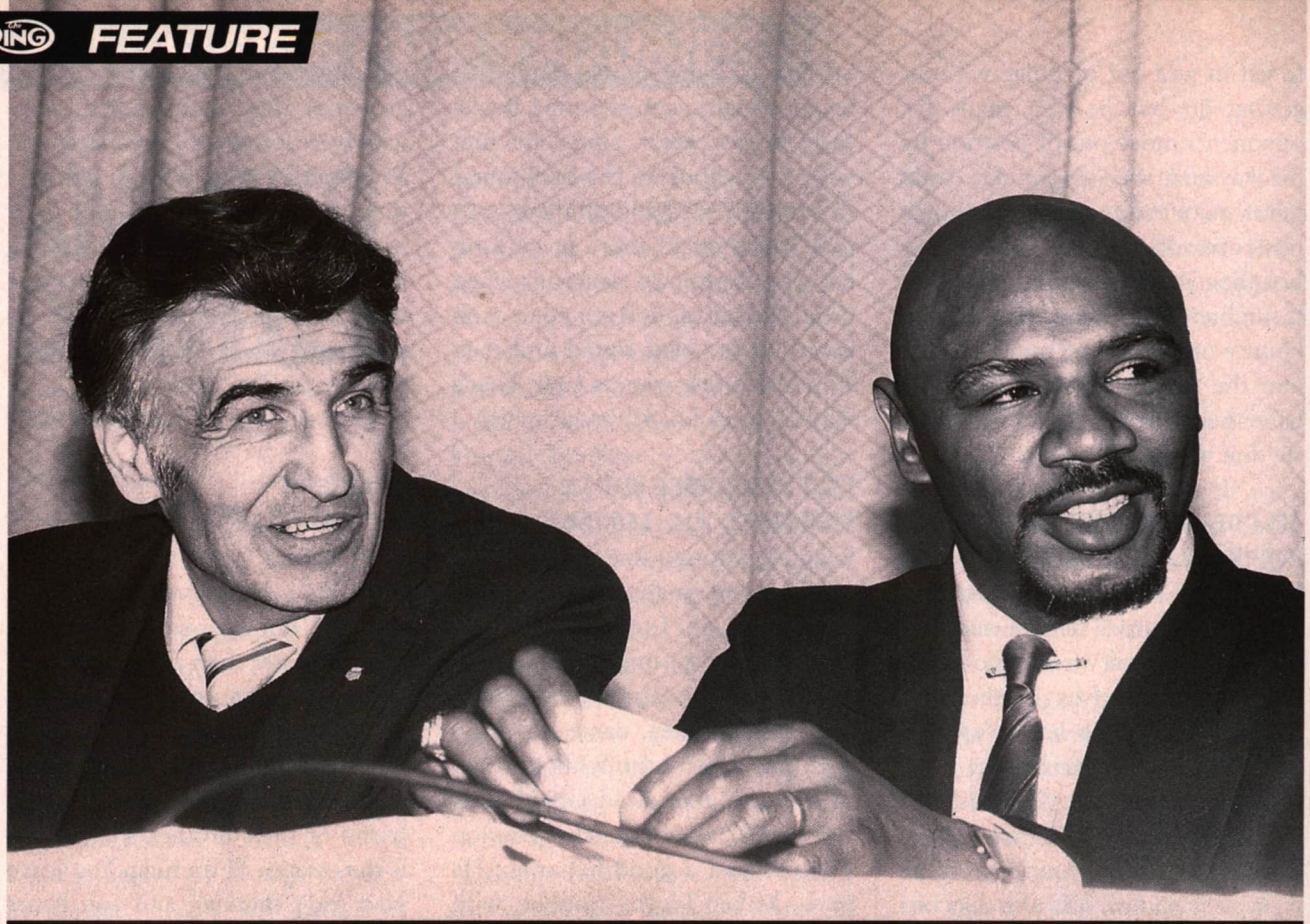
STRONGEST:
ALI – Look what Muhammad did to Liston when he was still growing! He manhandled guys who were known for their strength. Muhammad was a lot stronger than people thought. That's how he was able to slow Frazier down, by tying him up inside. It's how he wore Foreman down in Zaire. By the time his body fully matured in the late 1960s, there weren't a lot of guys who could outmuscle Ali.

SMARTEST:
NO PICK – They all had their smarts, every fighter I ever trained. People think I'm joking around when I say this but I'm serious. Fighters are much smarter than people realize. I know this because as their trainer it was my job to get to know them, and I did. I got to know every one of my fighters like I was their best friend or their brother. That to me is the essence of training. You learn your kid's thinking and you figure out how to bring out his talent and his confidence when it's time to fight. You have to recognize the smarts in your fighter if you want to get the best out of him. I tried to do that with my fighters and I think I usually did a pretty good job. I had great times with all my fighters. They were all very special people. ■



▶ **Angelo Dundee** felt that **Willie Pastrano** (left) was as good a boxer as **Sugar Ray Leonard**.

Image: **THE RING**



Goody Petronelli guided Marvin Hagler (right) to one of the most-successful careers in boxing history. Image: **THE RING**

GOODY PETRONELLI

1923-2012

By **Ron Borges**

Goody Petronelli found his second home at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Brockton at 10 years old. That was the first boxing gym he ever walked into. For all intents and purposes, he never left.

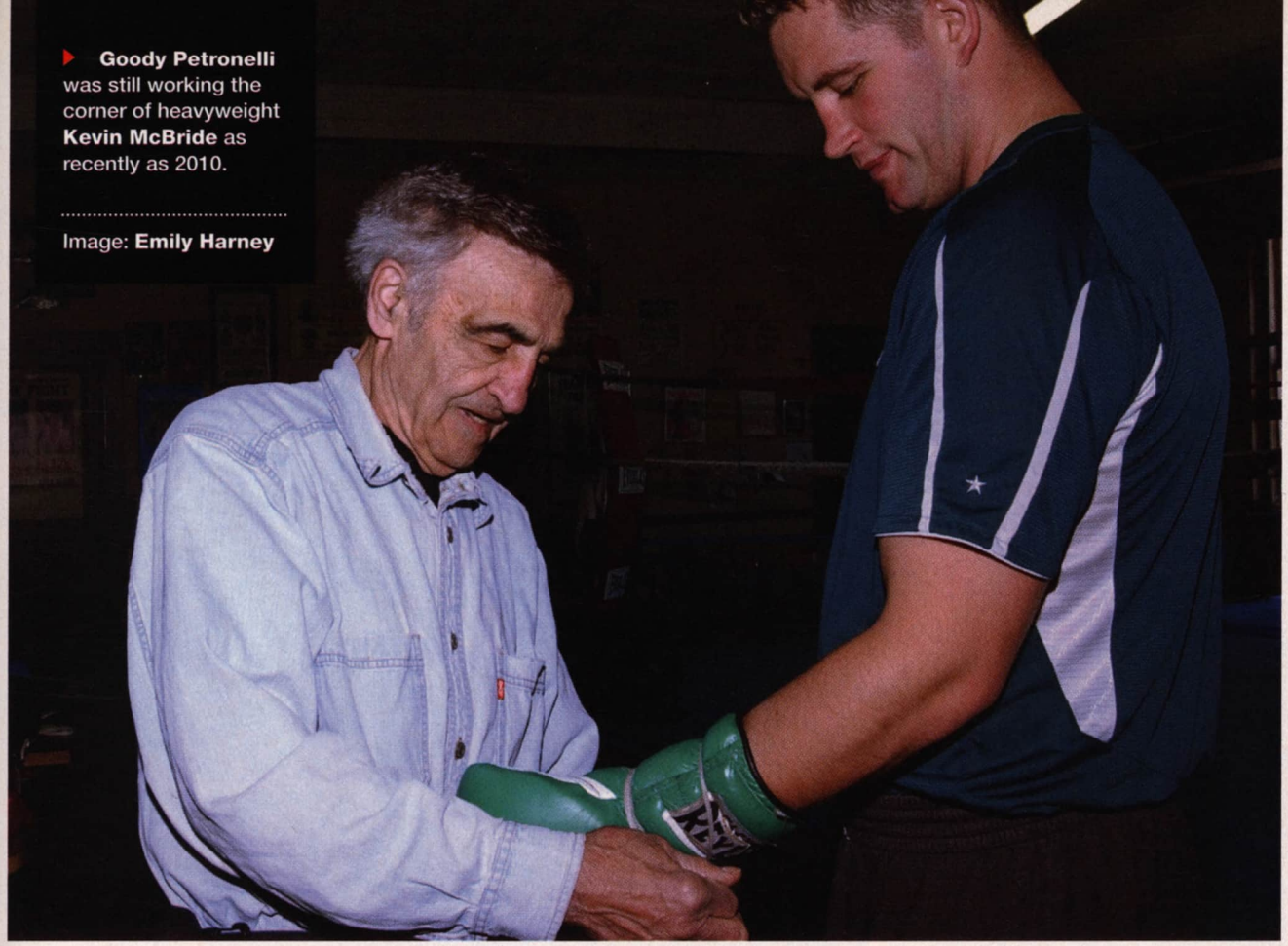
Petronelli would make his name as the trainer of Marvin Hagler but he didn't think any more of him than he did of the rawest 10-year-old Golden Glover who he was working with in the final months before he passed away on Jan. 29 at the age of 88. Although he had been a sailor and a mason at various times, what he really always was was a boxing man.

He did it because he loved it, fighting in the Navy and professionally for a time before opening a gym in Brockton in 1969 along side his brother Pat... who passed away six months ago. One evening, as they were laboring with a room full of anonymous kids who wanted to learn about boxing and about themselves, a skinny kid with a good head of hair walked in silently and sat down.

Nobody knew who he was so nobody said a word to him but he kept coming back. After about three days, Goody walked over and asked the only question that matters in a place like that: "You want to learn how to fight?"

The 16-year-old transplant from riot-torn Newark, N.J., who had moved to Brockton with his mother to avoid the streets, replied, "That's what I come up here for. One day, I'm going to be world champion."

Goody smiled kindly, as he often did, but thought, "Sure."



Goody Petronelli was still working the corner of heavyweight **Kevin McBride** as recently as 2010.

Image: **Emily Harney**

Then he began to work with this kid. He had no money for gym dues and needed a job, so the Petronellis did what they often had done: They hired him to haul bricks by day and taught him how to fight at night. That's how Marvin Hagler fell in love with Goody Petronelli, who would be in his corner from his first day in the ring to his last.

Such loyalty is rare in boxing. It is less evident these days than an American heavyweight who can fight. But together, the Petronelli brothers and Hagler formed what they called "The Triangle," and it took them all the way to the top, Hagler becoming one of the greatest middleweights in history and a world champion from 1980 to 1987.

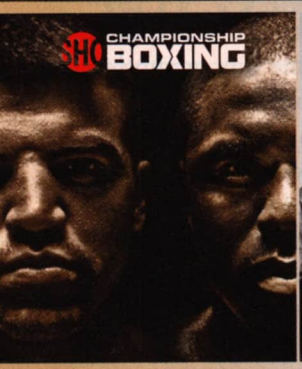
Where it took Petronelli was to where he always wanted to be. It took him to gyms and arenas around the world, but always he came back home to Petronelli Way, where his gym stood three stories up a wide staircase until the city closed it down six months ago in a dispute with the landlord.

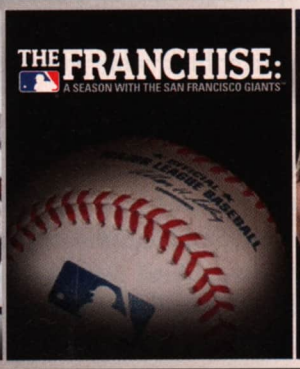
By then Petronelli had lost his brother and his wife of 67 years and a sadness descended on him that not even boxing could dispel. He died of heart failure on Jan. 29, 2012, three months after his wife's passing. The outpouring of affection for him at his funeral was, if you knew him, what you would have expected.

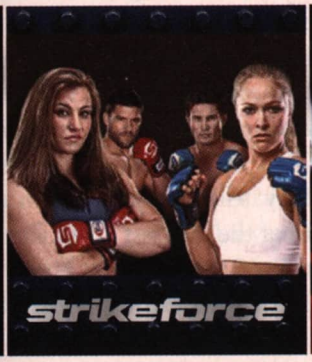
Goody Petronelli was beloved by his fighters because he loved them all. Not just Hagler, or Steve Collins, or Robbie Sims or Drake Thadzi, who beat James Toney when that was still an achievement. Not just the world champions or the guys good enough to challenge them but all of them. He loved the kid who had no talent but had grit. He loved the girls who started to come up those stairs, just as willing to pay the price for learning the dark arts he'd mastered as their male cohorts.

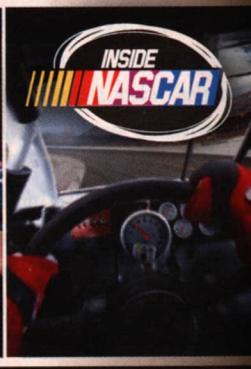
He loved them all because he loved boxing and fittingly the sport loved him back. He had his disappointments, none worse than the decision that was given to Sugar Ray Leonard over Hagler in the great champion's last fight. Nearly every time I'd see him it would come up one way or another and he'd say, "You're a boxing guy. How'd you have it?"

He knew how I had it, which was the same way he had it: closer than it should have been but clearly for his man. That's who Goody Petronelli was. He was always in your corner, even long after the fight was over. ■









SHOWTIME sports

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THE NEW BOSS

Q&A WITH SHOWTIME'S STEPHEN ESPINOZA

By **Joseph Santoliquito** Image: **Esther Lin-Showtime**

Stephen Espinoza had just heard that Andre Berto was pulling out. The rematch with Victor Ortiz was *supposed* to be Showtime's first big fight of 2012, its signal to the boxing world that it was a player in the big-game hunt. It was supposed to be Espinoza's charge from the gate – outbidding HBO, the money-soaked juggernaut that had wooed away his predecessor, for the chance to prove that his network, under his direction, would deliver boxing of the highest caliber to its subscribers.

And it was off because of a torn muscle.

One would think the news would at least warrant a flying paperweight, but Espinoza, who was only seven weeks into his tenure as the new Showtime Sports executive vice-president, met the setback with aplomb. His legal background at a boutique law firm taught him to deal with all the juggling. He's used to it.

The 42-year-old Stanford graduate is making the jump from attorney for Golden Boy

to being one of the top men in the boxing business, dealing with promotion companies and buying fights. He wants to bring a new energy to the position, but he also knows there is a considerable shadow looming over him in the shape of Ken Hershman, the longtime Showtime Sports head who is now Espinoza's counterpart at HBO.

"I respect Ken and what he did here, but no one has higher expectations than those I've set for myself," Espinoza said. "I want this network to succeed at the highest level with highest profile events. I don't want us to be a success in the context of a smaller budget or more limited resources. That's not an excuse to me; I'm not an excuse maker. I want us to be a success—period."

THE RING: How long have you have been in boxing?

Stephen Espinoza: My start came around the Oscar De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad fight in 1999. I started representing Oscar after the Trinidad fight. I was working for a firm, and when Oscar started re-evaluating things, Richard Schaefer and I started dealing with Oscar at the same time. That started my involvement with boxing, but I've been a fan forever.

THE RING: How did you get locked into boxing?

SE: That goes way back. I remember the first sports event I was ever emotionally involved with as a sports fan was crying over the first Muhammad Ali-Leon Spinks fight in 1978. When Spinks beat Ali, I felt that strongly about Ali. My grandfather, who emigrated from Mexico, was a huge boxing fan. If it was on TV, he would find it and watch it in our house. I'm not sure it was the first Ali fight I saw, but Ali-Spinks was a major event. Leon Spinks was billed as this bad guy and it was heartbreaking to see Ali losing like that. Still, I know, Ali wasn't the Ali of his prime then, but he was still Muhammad Ali to me, this little kid. I was that drawn to boxing by him.

THE RING: Now you're one of the most powerful men in the sport. What caused you to make this move from where you were as Golden Boy's lead counsel?

SE: The funny thing is this wasn't my idea (*laughs*). I did a lot of business deals with Oscar and [Mike] Tyson with HBO and Showtime. I hadn't given something like this a lot of thought. But a good friend of mine, Jack Tiernan, a sport agent for CAA Sports who represents a lot of high-profile athletes, is a big boxing fan as well. He called me up at one point in the process when the Showtime job became open about taking on the position. I thought for a minute (*laughs*). Jack reached out to arrange a meeting, with nothing in it for him, and I'm not sure who he called, but I was put in touch with CBS Human Resources. I flew out and met with Matt Blank, Showtime Chairman, the last week of October. Within a week after that, I signed a contract, and within three weeks after that, I was sitting in my new office in New York City on Monday, November 28, the Monday after Thanksgiving.

THE RING: What do you tell those critics that may question your past association with Golden Boy?

SE: Easy (*laughs*), the door is open to everyone. We're looking for compelling programming which is valuable and attractive to Showtime subscribers. The vast majority of our audience frankly doesn't care where the programming comes from. I can't buy bad fights from Golden Boy and tell subscribers I bought it because I'm friends with Golden Boy. Favoring any particular party won't be a successful strategy for me. I want to get the best programming available. Given my past relationship and being closely identified with Golden Boy for a while, it's a natural concern, but I've called people. One of the first I called was Bob Arum. There have been no complications in that relationship at all. I bought a Top Rank fight with the second big fight I purchased, Juan Manuel Lopez-Orlando Salido II. I got that done in two or three phone calls. Bob is very intelligent, Todd duBoef is very intelligent. They understand I have another job, and we all have the same objective, that's about putting quality fights on the air.

THE RING: How have you dealt with some of these early accusations that there might be some favoritism?

SE: It's not really frustrating. As a great trial lawyer once explained about jury trials, the jury trial system is set up for people who don't

"I REMEMBER THE FIRST SPORTS EVENT I WAS EVER EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED WITH AS A SPORTS FAN WAS CRYING OVER THE FIRST MUHAMMAD ALI-LEON SPINKS FIGHT IN 1978."

Stephen Espinoza's passion for boxing had its origin in the career of **Muhammad Ali**. Image: **Craig Bennett**

read newspapers, don't watch TV news, aren't the most informed about current affairs. They're the worst people to be on a jury. The analogy here is if you want someone with no relationships and friendships in boxing, you can get that. But to get someone with experience in this sport, there will some pre-existing relationships. All you can look for and ask for is objectivity. I'm sure that there are going to be a lot of assumptions about motives. There already was with the first fight I bought, which was a Golden Boy fight involving the Victor Ortiz-Andre Berto rematch, with an Al Haymon fighter. But the reality is anyone would have bought that fight. That's the reality. It was a great fight. It didn't matter who the two promoters were. They could have been two promoters working out of Siberia; I still wanted that fight (*laughs*).

THE RING: What was your background like?

SE: I was raised primarily by a single mom. My mother went back to school to get her law degree as a single mother with two kids. After she got divorced, she decided to get her law degree to support us. I must have been around 11 and my brother, Juan, was seven at the time. We were at an age not quite old enough to be left alone, so we went to law school with her. I always remember her in the law library, and me and my brother playing ping-pong (*laughs*). We were fixtures around that last school (*laughs*), but the environment wasn't what it was today. We're talking about a single mother with two young kids going to law school. I remember when I got into law school I told her I didn't remember studying this hard.

THE RING: How did your mother do it?

SE: She scraped by for a couple years. She's my hero; a single parent, a single mother going through law school and that in itself, for anyone to does that, is pretty impressive. We weren't the best behaved kids by a long shot, either (*laughs*). The funny thing about it is I didn't see a lot of what my mother went through. She took out student loans to get through law school; she got child support for us. We kind of saw the tip of the iceberg about a lot of things she did, the reading, writing, all went on after we went to bed. That's when she studied. It was sort of boring,

Stephen Espinoza said his goal is to make Showtime the market leader. Image: **craig Bennett**

to be honest with you, staying there with her, sometimes in the back of a class, but we didn't know that much else. My brother was seven and I was 10.

THE RING: Was law your choice or your mom's?
SE: My undergrad major was actually communications, with an emphasis on broadcast journalism. That was my original intent. I did radio play-by-play for Stanford's men's and women's basketball teams. My career goal was to get into that. But you can say I was sort of impatient toward that career path. I didn't want to be out covering high school sports in North Dakota and work my way up. So I got out, and I moved to Los Angeles and started working for a sports agency. I worked for Leigh Steinberg for a while, and I started law school during that point in 1992-93 at around 23. I just got out of Stanford and I only lasted in broadcast journalism for a year before I got impatient.

THE RING: How did the career change place you in this position?
SE: You can say there were all different facets involved, and, yes, you can say it's been a life geared toward sports. I graduated law school in 1996, and in an unusual fit of maturity (*laughs*), I started to question whether or not being a sports agent was a long-term fit as a career. What I did learn, however, was how to negotiate and structure business deals with Steinberg.

THE RING: For anyone famous?
SE: Everyone famous (*laughs*). Early on, I was doing a lot of production work for Oliver Stone and Joel Silver. I did a lot of juggling during that time. In roughly 1999, it's when Oscar and Richard came into the firm I was working for, looking for litigation advice. A boxing deal is a form of distribution deal. That's how I got into boxing. A couple of years later, I switched law firms and Oscar stayed with me, and the new firm started representing Mike Tyson, who I started working with as well.

THE RING: What have you learned about the boxing industry?
SE: The first thing that I observed was there is a lot of subterfuge; a lot of hiding the ball and playing fast and loose with numbers. How it was always necessary to ask the right questions to get the full picture. And yes (*laughs*), I found it wacky, as some would say, but I was coming from the TV world, which could match boxing for its wackiness. There is every personality you wrangle with, and all of them simultaneously. The thing about boxing and film, it's never boring.

THE RING: What touches are you hoping to make in putting your signature on Showtime?
SE: Boxing has been the flagship of sports programming. It's an incredible opportunity for the network. We need to rethink how to package and present the product, because it's being televised essentially the same way for the last 30 years. No other major sports are being broadcast the same way as five years ago, like the NBA and NFL. The fights of the 1980s look remarkably similar to what we have today. It's a combination of technology and creative decisions. What I'm going to do is televise all the preliminary fights on Showtime Extreme. These are the guys we're going to be building on to be future stars.

THE RING: Where do you want to be in this job a year from now?
SE: I want to be the market leader. If there is something we're doing, it's worth doing right. Why compete if you're not competing for the No. 1 spot? I think awareness of the entire competitive market place is an absolute necessity for developing our business. You can't ignore what any competitor is doing. Having said that, we will continue scheduling great programming. That's the priority. We want to establish the brand on the sports side as we have on the scripted series side. I want Showtime to succeed at the highest level with the highest profile events. ■

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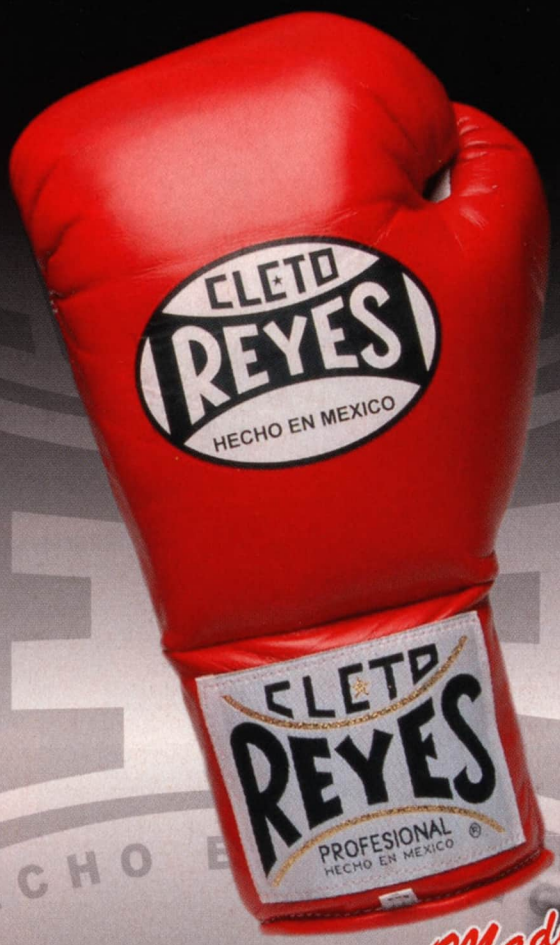

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Seth Mitchell has the passion to succeed. We'll see if he has the ability.

Image: **Patrick McDermott-Getty Images**

AMERICAN HOPE?

SETH MITCHELL HAS THE MINDSET AND IS IMPROVING

By: **Norm Frauenheim**

The search for America's next great heavyweight never ends. Then again, neither does fossil hunting. Just when it looks as if the task might be a job for a geologist, however, along comes somebody who makes it look as if a revival is possible for a piece of Americana once as productive and dominant as Detroit's auto industry.

Detroit is reported to be on the rebound. If a former Michigan State linebacker's initial impact is a sign of a future more bullish than extinct, so too is America's version of the dino-division. It's a very big if, of course. But Seth Mitchell understands that and a lot more.

"Yeah, it's very nice to hear," said Mitchell, who has produced a record of 24-0-1 (18 knockouts) in his apprenticeship. "No doubt, it's an accolade, an honor. I like it. I think it's pretty cool. But I don't let it go to my head. I understand what it means. One *L* and things can really turn on you. That's why I've got to work, work real hard on using the athleticism I've been blessed with."

Being called the next anything is hazardous at best. To wit: With apologies to Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, the NBA is still looking for the next Michael Jordan.

If not for a series of injuries to a right knee subjected to seven surgical procedures from 2001 through 2003 at Michigan State, Mitchell might have been called the next Ray Lewis, the Baltimore Ravens linebacker who defines the position today. Mitchell is more modest than that. Had his knee held up, he guesses he might have been more like the next Zach Thomas, the former Miami Dolphins linebacker and eight-time Pro Bowler known for his ferocity.

But the heavyweight division is older than even the Super Bowl and the slam dunk. Look at its rich history, and you get an approximation of how big and perhaps burdensome that label could be.

Make no mistake, nobody is getting ahead of themselves, especially Mitchell. He's not the next Muhammad Ali or even the next Shannon Briggs, the last American to hold a piece of the title, the World Boxing Organization's version,

THE STATE OF THE HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION

A LOOK AT BOXING'S PREMIER WEIGHT CLASS BY DECADE

By: **Cliff Rold**

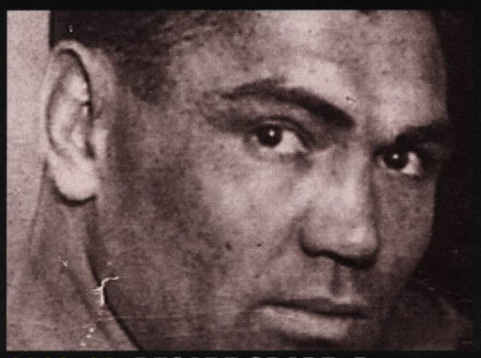
Seth Mitchell is the latest hope in a relatively weak field of American heavyweights, perhaps the worst in history. The international heavyweight field isn't much better, although the Klitschko brothers save it from being a disaster. How do today's heavyweights compare with those of the past? In this feature, THE RING lists the best five heavyweights overall and among Americans since the start of the gloved era. Plus, we give each decade a letter grade to give you an idea of how strong the field was at the time, taking into consideration the depth of talent, quality of action, activity, the affects of segregation where relevant and the state of the heavyweight crown.

1892-99 DECADE GRADE: B

WORLD	U.S.
1. Jim Jeffries	**1. Jim Jeffries**
2. Bob Fitzsimons	2. Jim Corbett
3. Jim Corbett	3. Tom Sharkey
4. Peter Maher	4. Joe Choynski
5. Tom Sharkey	5. Frank Childs

1900-09 DECADE GRADE: B+

WORLD	U.S.
1. Jack Johnson	**1. Jack Johnson**
2. Jim Jeffries	2. Jim Jeffries
3. Sam Langford	3. Joe Jeannette
4. Joe Jeannette	4. Sam McVea
5. Sam McVea	5. "Denver" Ed Martin

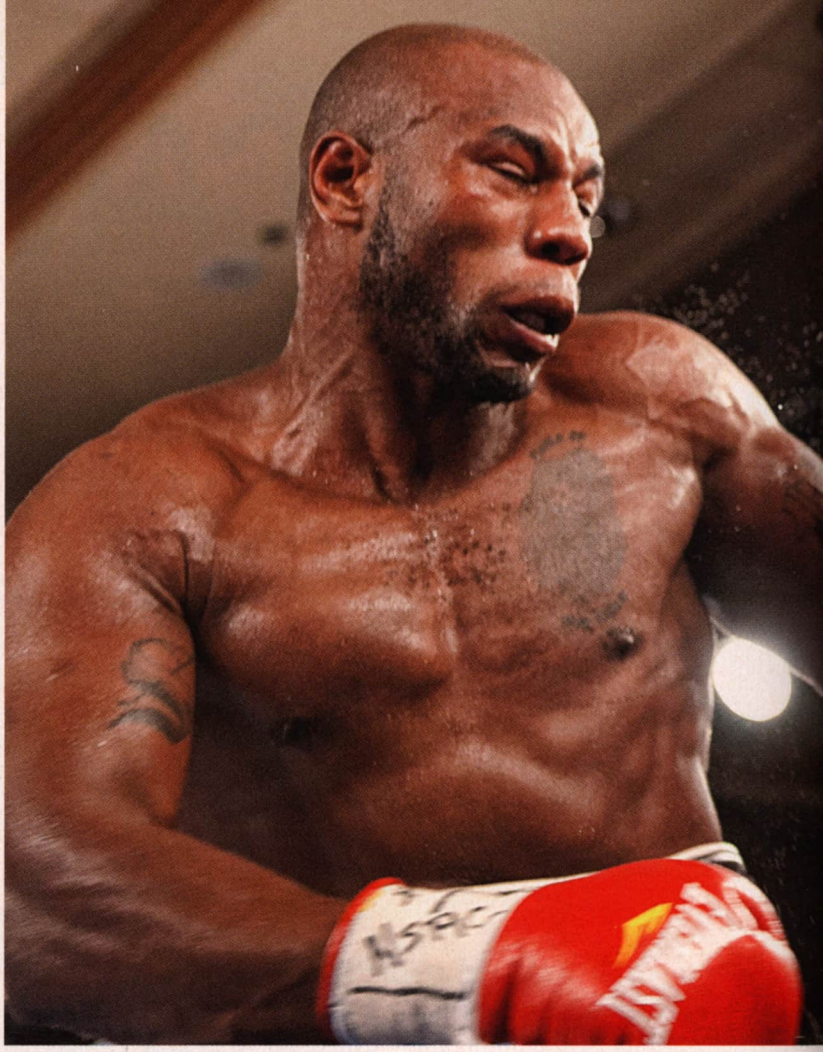


1910-19 DECADE GRADE: B

WORLD	U.S.
1. Jack Dempsey	**1. Jack Dempsey**
2. Jack Johnson	2. Jack Johnson
3. Sam Langford	3. Harry Wills
4. Harry Wills	4. Joe Jeannette
5. Joe Jeannette	5. Jess Willard

1920-29 DECADE GRADE: C+

WORLD	U.S.
1. Jack Dempsey	**1. Jack Dempsey**
2. Harry Wills	2. Harry Wills
3. Gene Tunney	3. Gene Tunney
4. Jack Sharkey	4. Jack Sharkey
5. George Godfrey	5. George Godfrey



with his 12th- round knockout of Sergei Liakhovich in 2006. For now, just a restoration of American competitiveness will suffice in what Mitchell and his management call the "K" division. That's K for the Klitschko brothers, Wladimir and Vitali, who have captured the division and turned it into a Eurozone preserve.

Step-by-measured-step, however, Mitchell is confident he can transform himself from promising linebacker to a fighter who can begin to restore an American presence in what was once boxing's flagship division.

"I'm not saying that I'm ready for them right now," Mitchell said. "But after three or four fights against the right guys – say Chris Arreola – I could be. Maybe late 2012 or early 2013. The Ks are very disciplined and very big at 6-foot-6 to 6-7. They fight behind a great jab and have all that experience. For America to be back in the heavyweight division, you first have to deal with them. I've heard all of the criticism about the heavyweights. It's justified. But no matter what is said, you've got to remember that the Ks can really, really fight."

In terms of timing, Mitchell appears to be in good position to challenge at least one of the Klitschkos. At 40, Vitali might be close to retirement. He was talking about making a third run at mayor of Kiev after his Feb. 18 fight with Dereck Chisora in Munich, Germany. That leaves Wladimir, who turns 36

▶ **Seth Mitchell** has fed on journeymen like **Hector Ferreyro** as he's developing.

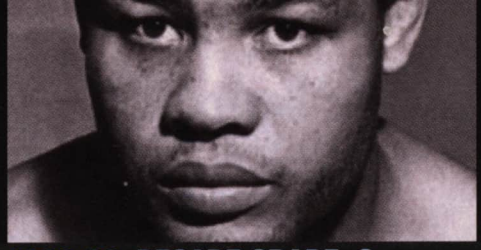
Image: **Chris Cozzone-Fightwireimages**

on March 25, 22 days after he faces Jean-Marc Mormeck in Dusseldorf, Germany. Mitchell is already on Wladimir's radar. In interviews with both Euro and U.S. media, he has called Mitchell "an emerging heavyweight."

Wladimir's awareness of Mitchell coincides with heightened media attention and a reawakened appetite for a heavyweight with a chance at sparking an American renewal. In Ken Hershman's first sit-down with the media in New York since he was hired to run HBO sports, he indicated he hopes the heavyweights eventually become more than an undercard bout or a Klitschko fight seen only on EPIX.

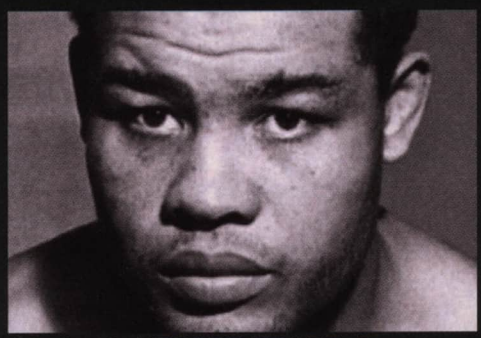
"It's a dilemma," Hershman told the media on Jan. 31. "And I don't pretend that the heavyweight division isn't hugely important to boxing. It is and hopefully in the next year or two we'll get some prospects we think we can really count on to re-energize the U.S. component of that market. Right now, I don't see it in the immediate future."

But after three or four fights, who knows? There's a chance Mitchell could turn Hershman's dilemma into an opportunity. Safe to say HBO will be watching. Also, safe to say HBO knows his story. It's compelling, especially his late arrival to a craft the Klitschkos and so many others have mastered since they were teenagers. Mitchell is 29. He was 27 years old when he made his pro debut in January 2008 after going 9-1 as an amateur. He decided on a ring



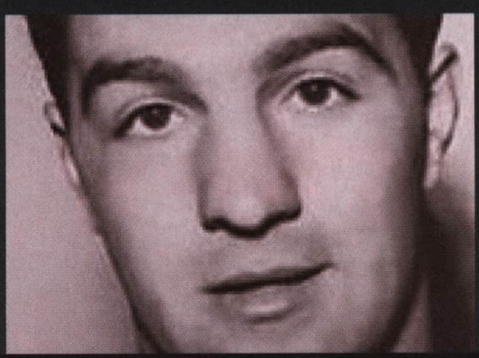
1930-39 DECADE GRADE: C-

WORLD	U.S.
1. Joe Louis	**1. Joe Louis**
2. Max Schmeling	2. Max Baer
3. Max Baer	3. Jim Braddock
4. Jim Braddock	4. Jack Sharkey
5. Jack Sharkey	5. Steve Hamas



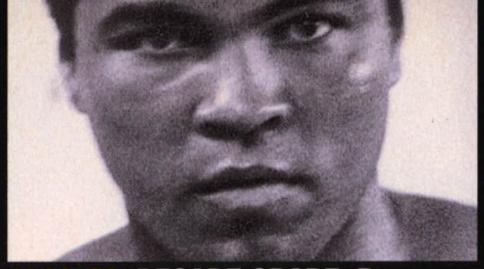
1940-49 DECADE GRADE: B-

WORLD	U.S.
1. Joe Louis	**1. Joe Louis**
2. Ezzard Charles	2. Ezzard Charles
3. Jersey Joe Walcott	3. Jersey Joe Walcott
4. Jimmy Bivins	4. Jimmy Bivins
5. Elmer Ray	5. Elmer Ray



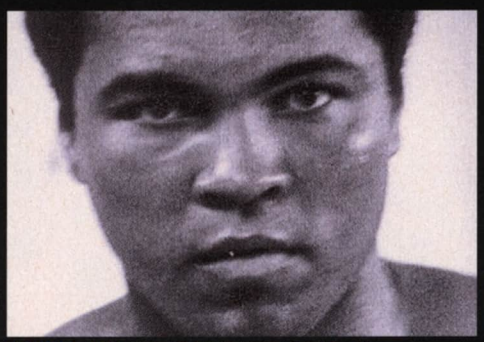
1950-59 DECADE GRADE: B

WORLD	U.S.
1. Rocky Marciano	**1. Rocky Marciano**
2. Sonny Liston	2. Sonny Liston
3. Ezzard Charles	3. Ezzard Charles
4. Jersey Joe Walcott	4. Jersey Joe Walcott
5. Floyd Patterson	5. Floyd Patterson



1960-69 DECADE GRADE: B+

WORLD	U.S
1. Muhammad Ali	**1. Muhammad Ali**
2. Joe Frazier	2. Joe Frazier
3. Sonny Liston	3. Sonny Liston
4. Floyd Patterson	4. Floyd Patterson
5. James Ellis	5. James Ellis
GRADE: B-	**GRADE: B**

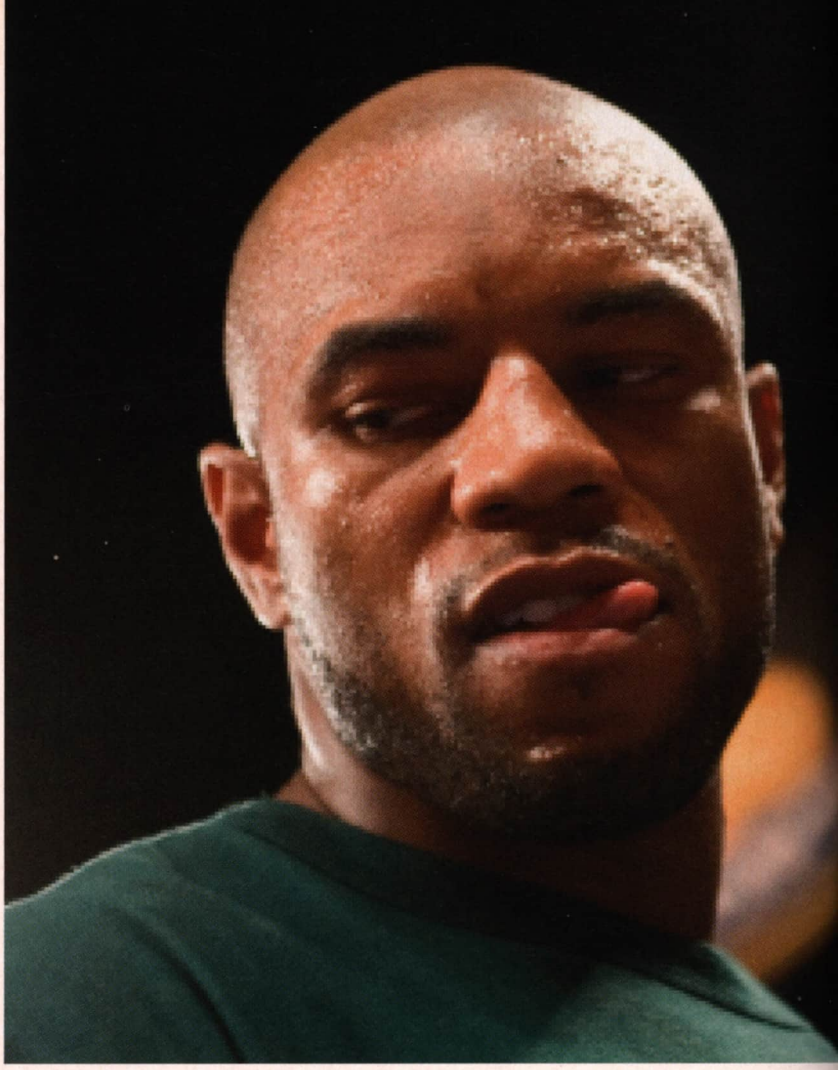


1970-79 DECADE GRADE: A+

WORLD	U.S.
1. Muhammad Ali	**1. Muhammad Ali**
2. George Foreman	2. George Foreman
3. Joe Frazier	3. Joe Frazier
4. Larry Holmes	4. Larry Holmes
5. Ken Norton	5. Ken Norton
GRADE: A-	**GRADE: A**

1980-89 DECADE GRADE: B-

WORLD	U.S.
1. Mike Tyson	**1. Mike Tyson**
2. Larry Holmes	2. Larry Holmes
3. Tim Witherspoon	3. Tim Witherspoon
4. Evander Holyfield	4. Evander Holyfield
5. Michael Spinks	5. Michael Spinks
GRADE: B-	**GRADE: B**



The difference is that Zbikowski fought for years an amateur in Chicago. Mitchell did not.

"I never thought about boxing," said Mitchell, a Parade All-American at Gwynn Park High School in Brandywine, Md. "I mean, I was like everybody else. I knew about Mike Tyson. I watched Tyson's fights. But I never really paid much attention to the sport. Other than Tyson, the first fights I really watched were Floyd Mayweather against Zab Judah (in 2006) and Oscar De La Hoya against Felix Trinidad (in 1999)."

Translation: Mitchell is playing catch-up. So far, however, he's catching up at a surprisingly fast pace.

"I've gone through five or six learning curves," he said. "Through each one, I've been amazed. There were things that I had to think through before. Now, I'm doing them by instinct. It's like, wow, I'm figuring this out. I'm gaining more and more confidence all of the time."

Surprised too is his trainer, Andre Hunter, who was skeptical at first.

"I had worked with too many other guys, ex-football players, who just failed at boxing," Hunter said. "But Seth is a real student and nobody is a harder worker. It amazes me at how fast he picks things up."

If anything, Mitchell's football background might be misleading.

"There's really not much carryover," said Mitchell, whose motivation includes a wife and two young kids. "Because of

"I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT BOXING. I MEAN, I WAS LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. I KNEW ABOUT MIKE TYSON. I WATCHED TYSON'S FIGHTS. BUT I NEVER REALLY PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO THE SPORT."

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football, I might be able to cut off the ring better, mostly because I knew how to pursue ball carriers as a linebacker. But other than that, there's very little."

Mitchell, perhaps like former soccer player and current middleweight champion Sergio Martinez, is a natural athlete. His manager, Sharif Salim, remembers an unstoppable power forward at Gwynn Park.

"He was a high school version of Charles Barkley," Salim said.

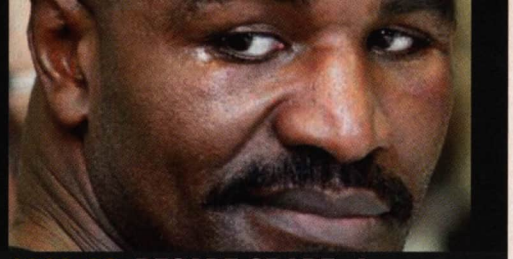
For Mitchell and every other aspiring fighter, there's only one question and it can only be answered when the inevitable lands. How will he react? Getting hit in the ring is not like getting hit in football.

"It's just different," Mitchell said. "I don't really know how to explain it. Just different."

Mitchell expects adversity, whether it is delivered by a Klitschko or somebody else. In a way, he's been preparing for it throughout his life. His NFL dreams were forever broken by a busted knee.

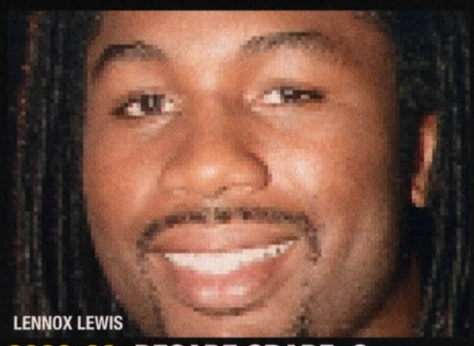
"He was raised by a single mom in some very tough circumstances, first in Virginia Beach and then Maryland," Salim said. "There was a time when he lived in a place without utilities. His mom used to take a hose and run it from a neighbor's house to fill up the bathtub. He knows how to be ready for whatever."

Whatever's next. ■



1990-99 DECADE GRADE: A-

WORLD	U.S.
1. Evander Holyfield	**1. Evander Holyfield**
2. Lennox Lewis	2. Riddick Bowe
3. Riddick Bowe	3. Mike Tyson
4. Mike Tyson	4. George Foreman
5. Ike Ibeabuchi	5. Michael Moorer
GRADE: B	**GRADE: B**



LENNOX LEWIS

2000-09 DECADE GRADE: C

WORLD	U.S.
1. Lennox Lewis	**1. Chris Byrd**
2. Wladimir Klitschko	2. Hasim Rahman
3. Vitali Klitschko	3. Lamon Brewster
4. Chris Byrd	4. John Ruiz
5. Ruslan Chagaev	5. James Toney
GRADE: B	**GRADE: C**

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

2010-PRESENT DECADE GRADE: D+

WORLD	U.S.
1. Wladimir Klitschko	**1. Eddie Chambers**
2. Vitali Klitschko	2. Tony Thompson
3. Alex Povetkin	3. Chris Arreola
4. David Haye	4. Franklin Lawrence
5. Tomasz Adamek	5. Seth Mitchell
GRADE: C	**GRADE: D**

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

5 SHOWDOWNS THAT SHOULD'VE HAPPENED ... BUT DIDN'T

By **Don Stradley**

Countless column inches have been spent on how Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. have hurt the sport by not fighting each other. But a look back at boxing history shows us that there have been dozens upon dozens of potentially great fights that were talked about, only to die at the negotiation table. Sometimes, there were racial or political reasons. Sometimes egos got in the way. Most of the time, it was a matter of money. Boxing is a business, after all.

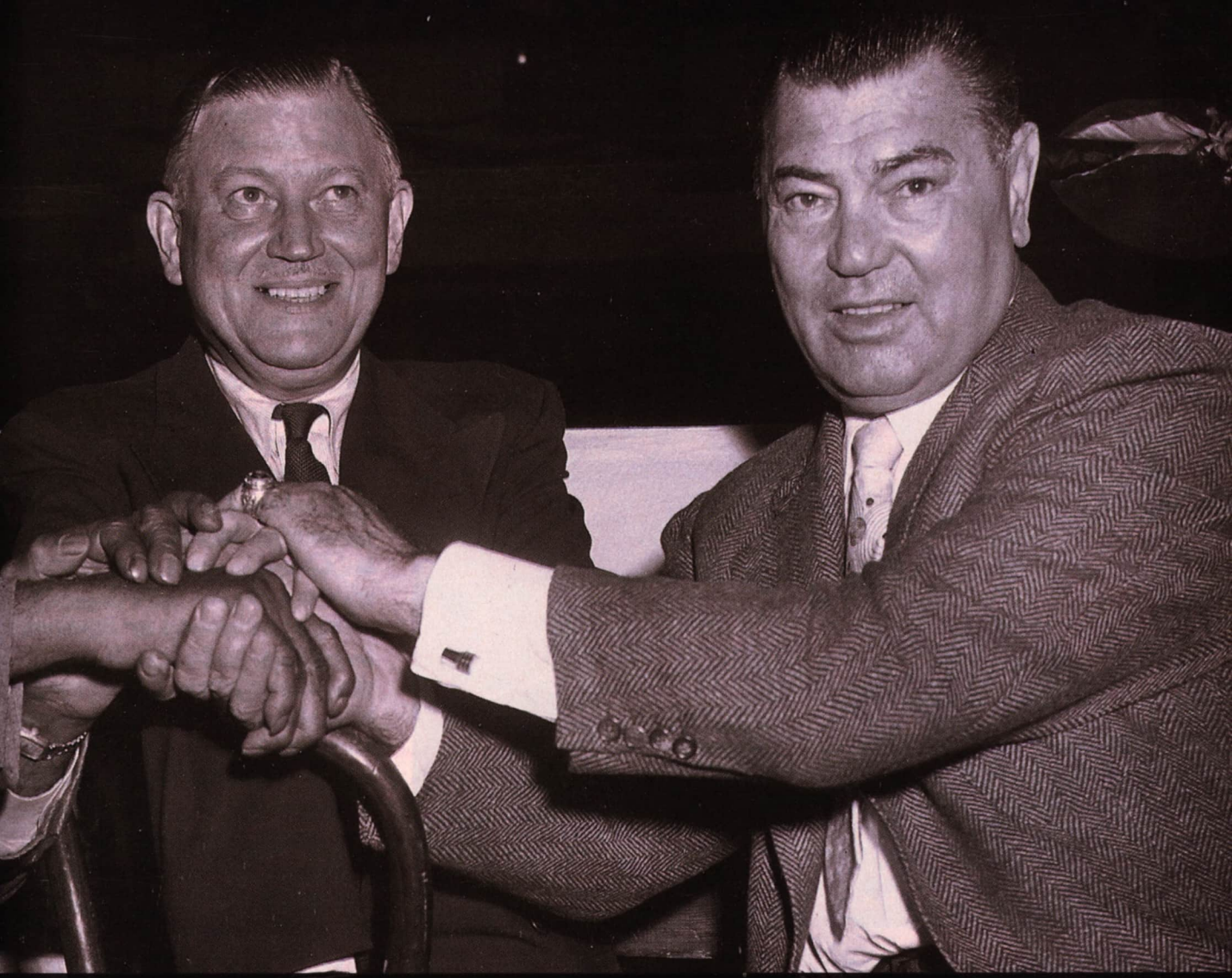
Anyway, if you happen to run into an old-time fight fan, or an old-time fighter, and he starts bragging that in his day everybody fought everybody, don't believe him. As you'll see in the following section, there's plenty of evidence to the contrary.

JACK DEMPSEY VS HARRY WILLS

Dempsey was in his third year as heavyweight champion, while Wills, "The Black Panther of New Orleans," billed himself as "the colored champion." Wills' manager, Paddy Mullins, had campaigned aggressively for a title shot, finally getting the New York State Athletic Commission to put some pressure on Dempsey. Mullins figured he had a done deal when the fighters signed a contract in July of 1922, but there was a stipulation that a promoter and date had to be agreed upon within 60 days. The wording had been created by Dempsey's crafty manager, Jack "Doc" Kearns, and Kearns knew no one in whitewashed 1920s America would touch the bout.

Many intertwining conflicts stood in the way. Kearns didn't like Wills, and Mullins didn't like Tex Rickard, the promoter of Dempsey's major bouts. NYSAC Commissioner William Muldoon had growing concerns about gross commercialism in sports and proposed a price cap on tickets for the bout, which infuriated Rickard. The promoter began talking to Montreal businessmen about staging Dempsey-Wills in Canada, but that plan collapsed when the Montreal backers mysteriously withdrew.

The biggest obstacle was that local politicians, in both Montreal and New York, didn't want a black fighter challenging for the heavyweight title. Only a dozen years had passed since Rickard



Harry Wills (left) and **Jack Dempsey** were friendly in later years but never met in the ring in what would've been a fascinating showdown. Image: **THE RING**

had promoted a bout between Jim Jeffries, who was white, and Jack Johnson, who became the first black heavyweight champion. That bout had inspired race riots throughout the country, resulting in a handful of deaths. Many feared that a bout between Dempsey and Wills would incite similar violence.

The bout didn't die, though. It came back to life in 1925 when Dempsey, tired of being labeled a racist, held a press conference to announce that he was ready to face Wills. Nothing had changed, though. New York political figures still feared racial controversies. Kearns even attempted to make the bout in Chicago with a promoter named B.C. Clements, but Dempsey insisted that Rickard promote the bout. In Dempsey's 1977 autobiography, he said he was being pulled in too many different directions and even blamed his wife Estelle for "leaning on her Southern heritage and browbeating" him into not fighting a black man. Gradually, it appeared that Dempsey's next opponent would be Gene Tunney.

Any hope that the fight might yet take place was dashed in 1926, when Wills, at 37, was battered by Jack Sharkey for 12-plus rounds before the old man was DQ'd for a backhand blow.

"Harry Wills was a good fighter," Dempsey said in a 1970 interview. "There was a color barrier. They wouldn't let you fight no place. Rickard wanted to make the fight, but there was no place you could put it on. The result of it is the fight never came off. I wanted to fight him. I knew it would have made a lot of money for both of us."

WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED:
Had they met in 1922, the younger, quicker Dempsey would have stopped Wills. But Wills might've won in 1925 or '26, when Dempsey was coming off a long period of inactivity.

James J. Braddock decided it made more business sense to fight **Joe Louis** instead of **Max Schmeling**. Image: **THE RING**

JAMES J. BRADDOCK VS MAX SCHMELING

The Cinderella Man versus the hero of Nazi Germany should've been a major boxing event. And in 1936, it very nearly happened.

Braddock had lifted the heavyweight title from Max Baer in 1935, and in 1936 Schmeling had defeated the top young heavyweight in the country – Joe Louis. Madison Square Garden promoter Mike Jacobs had wanted to match Louis and Braddock for the championship, but even Louis' greatest admirers knew Schmeling was a more deserving challenger, based on his having stopped Louis.

A Braddock-Schmeling bout was signed in September of '36 for the Garden, but Braddock injured his hand in training and the bout was postponed. As Braddock took time off to heal, Jacobs began fearing the Anti-Nazi League would boycott the fight and that Jewish fans in New York would not buy tickets. Ever since he beat Louis, Schmeling had been hailed in Germany as a symbol of Nazi might. Of course, Schmeling wasn't a party member, but Jacobs feared anti-Nazi sentiment might hamper sales. Braddock's manager, Joe Gould, was also having doubts about Schmeling, but was less concerned about politics than he was about money. He realized that Louis was still the biggest draw in the sport. The talk began to shift toward Braddock defending his title against Louis, rather than Schmeling.

Several months of confusion and arguments followed. The New York State Athletic Commission suspected something was afoul and threatened to levy fines and suspensions at both the Braddock and Louis camps. Gould suddenly backtracked and said Braddock-Schmeling could still happen if Schmeling's people put up more money. The possibility of staging the bout in Germany was explored, but Jacobs had another concern – if Schmeling won, there was a good chance he'd keep the championship in Germany, meaning Jacobs couldn't make any money from the title at Madison Square Garden.

On Feb. 19, 1937, Braddock signed for a June bout with Louis in Chicago, leaving Schmeling without a title shot. Gould, trying to make as much money for Braddock as possible, landed the deal of all deals: 10 percent of Jacob's profits from all heavyweight title bouts he promoted over the next 10 years would go straight into the pockets of Braddock and Gould. It was a deal Braddock couldn't refuse, and when the NYSAC fined him for not fighting Schmeling, Braddock couldn't have cared less.

Schmeling staged a bizarre protest, taking part in a mock weigh-in a few weeks before Braddock-Louis. Newsmen gathered to see Schmeling standing on a scale, but with no opponent. "The championship is a joke," the German said. "And the New York commissioner is a bigger joke."

WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED: Schmeling was stronger and a better all-around fighter. He would've beaten Braddock on points over 15 rounds.

JAKE LAMOTTA VS ROCKY GRAZIANO

Fans of great Italian middleweights must have been ecstatic during the spring months of 1950 when it was announced that LaMotta, the champion, would defend his title against Graziano, a former champion who still had tremendous box office clout. Financially, the bout would've been a sensation in New York, where both fighters had strong followings. Stylistically it would've been incredible, with the berserk, free-swinging Graziano against the grim, methodical LaMotta.

Graziano had allegedly turned down LaMotta's offer at first but gradually warmed to the idea. After scoring a fourth-round knockout of Henry Brimm in May 1950, Graziano told The Associated Press, "Now we'll see who is the better fighter when LaMotta and I tangle for the title next month."

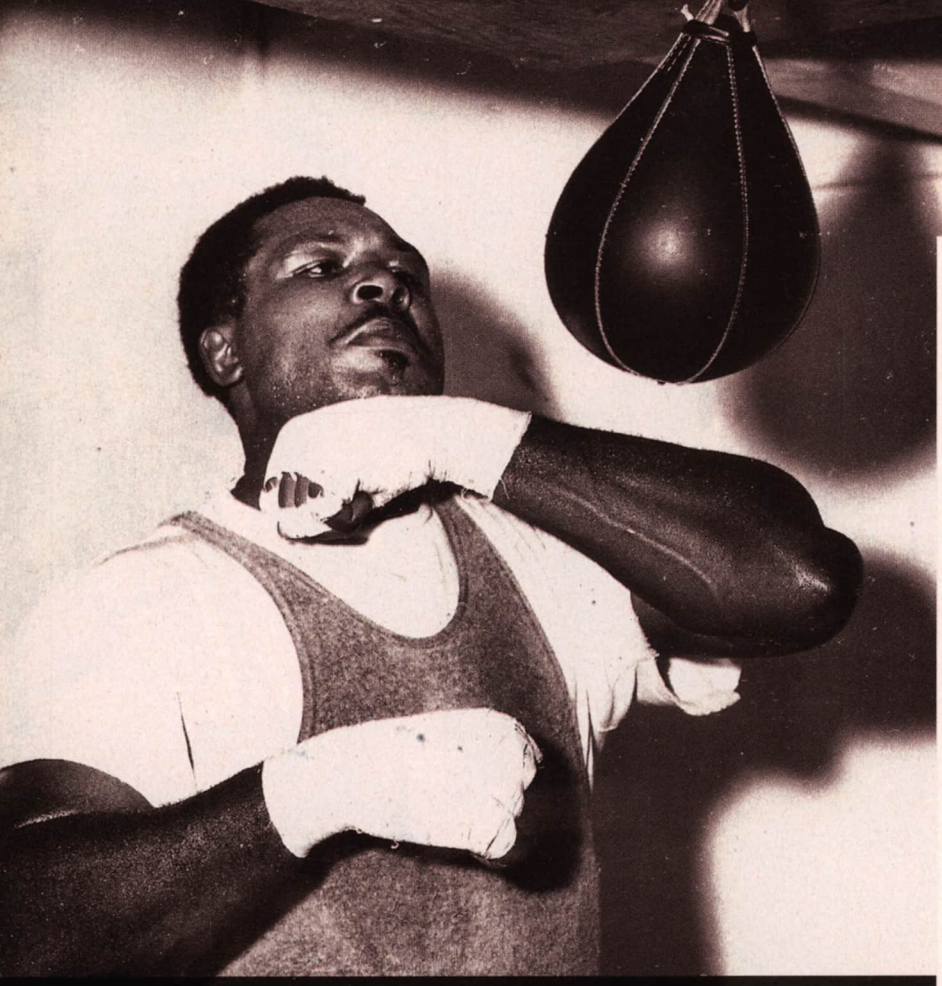
Unfortunately, while the bout was generating interest, many thought it reeked worse than a Brooklyn fish market. Both fighters were known for having underworld connections; both were known for coming down with suspicious injuries to get out of bouts; LaMotta hadn't looked great since taking the title from Marcel Cerdan a year earlier, and Graziano was past his prime. Many wondered why LaMotta wasn't facing a more worthy contender, like Sugar Ray Robinson. But LaMotta figured he could make more money by fighting Graziano first, and then Robinson. Besides, he'd already fought Robinson five times, and in his opinion Robinson could wait. But adding to the bout's suspect nature was the fact that LaMotta and Graziano had been pals since childhood. Lawton Carver of the International News Service wrote that the bout was nothing more than "a cooked up deal of no real standing."

There were other problems. First, the IBC, Madison Square Garden and the New York Managers Guild spent weeks debating how the television money would be split, with the Guild refusing to approve the bout until a new TV contract was arranged. Showing blatant disregard for all three, the fighters signed for a June bout at the Polo Grounds. The revelation that there was a rematch clause if Graziano won created more controversy, for every manager in New York had a middleweight they thought deserved a title shot; LaMotta and Graziano could possibly hog-tie the championship for several months. The IBC, perhaps to appease the Guild, held up ticket sales; rumors spread that the fight was "in trouble." Graziano and LaMotta were portrayed in editorials as two arrogant pugs trying to circumvent the system.

A fight between pals **Rocky Graziano** (left) and **Jake LaMotta** probably would've been a war. Image: **THE RING**

Finally, Graziano injured his thumb and pulled out two weeks before the June date. Many assumed the injury was a fake, but Graziano took several months off before getting back in the ring. Maybe his thumb injury was legit. Or maybe, as LaMotta wrote in his memoirs, "There was a curse on that fight."

WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED: Graziano was good, but LaMotta was great. The "Bronx Bull" would've stopped Graziano in the 12th or 13th round of an entertaining fight.



Sugar Ray Robinson wanted to fight high-flying light heavyweight titleholder **Arhcie Moore** (pictured) in 1959 but it never happened. Image: **THE RING**

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON VS ARCHIE MOORE

In January of 1959, Robinson was in negotiations for a third bout with Carmen Basilio. In his typical fashion, he changed his mind and dropped a bomb on the press.

"I want to fight Archie Moore instead of Carmen Basilio," the 38-year-old middleweight champion said. "I want to fight Moore because he's the hottest attraction in boxing right now. And I won't be happy till I win the light heavyweight crown – my third."

Robinson's announcement might have annoyed Basilio, but it made sense. A bout with "Ancient Archie" had major commercial potential. For one thing, Moore was definitely at the peak of his popularity, having just KO'd Yvon Durelle in one of the greatest bouts of all time. Even in his mid 40s, Moore was a dominating light heavyweight champion. Robinson had been champion at welterweight and middleweight but had failed in his one attempt to win the 175-pound laurels, collapsing in the heat of Yankee Stadium against Moore's predecessor, Joey Maxim. Moore did his part to fan the flames, saying after Robinson had beaten Basilio, "I'm not hard to find. If any promoter wants to discuss matching me and Robinson, I will listen."

What no one knew was that Robinson and Moore had already begun exploring the idea on their own. Several months earlier, accompanied by his wife, Moore had accepted an invitation to Robinson's New York home. It was during dinner that Robinson proposed they fight. It had less to do with Moore's light heavyweight title than it did with two businessmen plotting a potential windfall.

By March, the two living legends were on the verge of signing a contract to meet.

"We both want the fight," said Robinson. "We're in the twilight of our careers, and this would be a real big payday for both of us. I'm sure it would draw a million dollars at the Yankee Stadium in late June. We've been dickering with several promoters, and we'll pick the one who offers us the best deal."

Unfortunately, the National Boxing Association demanded Robinson fight Basilio again or be stripped of the middleweight championship. As Robinson pondered his next move, Moore surprised everyone by accepting a rematch with Durelle. After that, Moore spent several months away from boxing to act in a movie and pursue other interests.

Why Moore ditched Robinson for Durelle left many observers mystified. One rumor was that Moore wanted to dabble in promoting, and the people staging the Durelle rematch offered to help Moore get started in the business. The Robinson-Moore talk continued for another year or two, but Robinson would always dismiss it and criticize Moore for ducking out the first time.

WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED:
By 1959, Robinson's amazing foot speed was gone. Moore, bigger and more powerful, would grind Robinson down and probably stop him in the late rounds.

RIDDICK BOWE VS LENNOX LEWIS

On Oct. 31, 1992, Lewis scored a stunning two-round knockout of Donovan Ruddock to claim the No. 1 contender's position in the WBC world rankings. The boxing world took notice because the WBC titleholder happened to be Bowe, a fighter Lennox had KO'd in the finals of the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Since then, Bowe had improved immeasurably and had earned the WBC, WBA and IBF belts by beating Evander Holyfield in a memorable bout. With Lewis installed as the WBC's top contender, a potential Bowe-Lewis showdown seemed, as they say in the business, a "natural." Along with the revenge angle, it had the always popular USA vs. England angle. The bout seemed destined to become reality, especially when HBO offered a $32 million purse to be split by the fighters.

But Bowe's manager, the colorful Rock Newman, seemed intent on scuttling Lewis as a challenger. First, Newman demanded a 90-10 split of the purse for his fighter. Lewis' camp rejected the offer. Newman then offered Lewis $2 million to fight on a Bowe undercard, which was also rejected. Newman then offered Lewis $3 million to fight Bowe. This time Lewis said he would take it, going so far as to say he'd give his paycheck to starving Somalis if he lost. Lewis' manager, Frank Maloney, shot down the idea, calling Bowe's camp "untrustworthy."

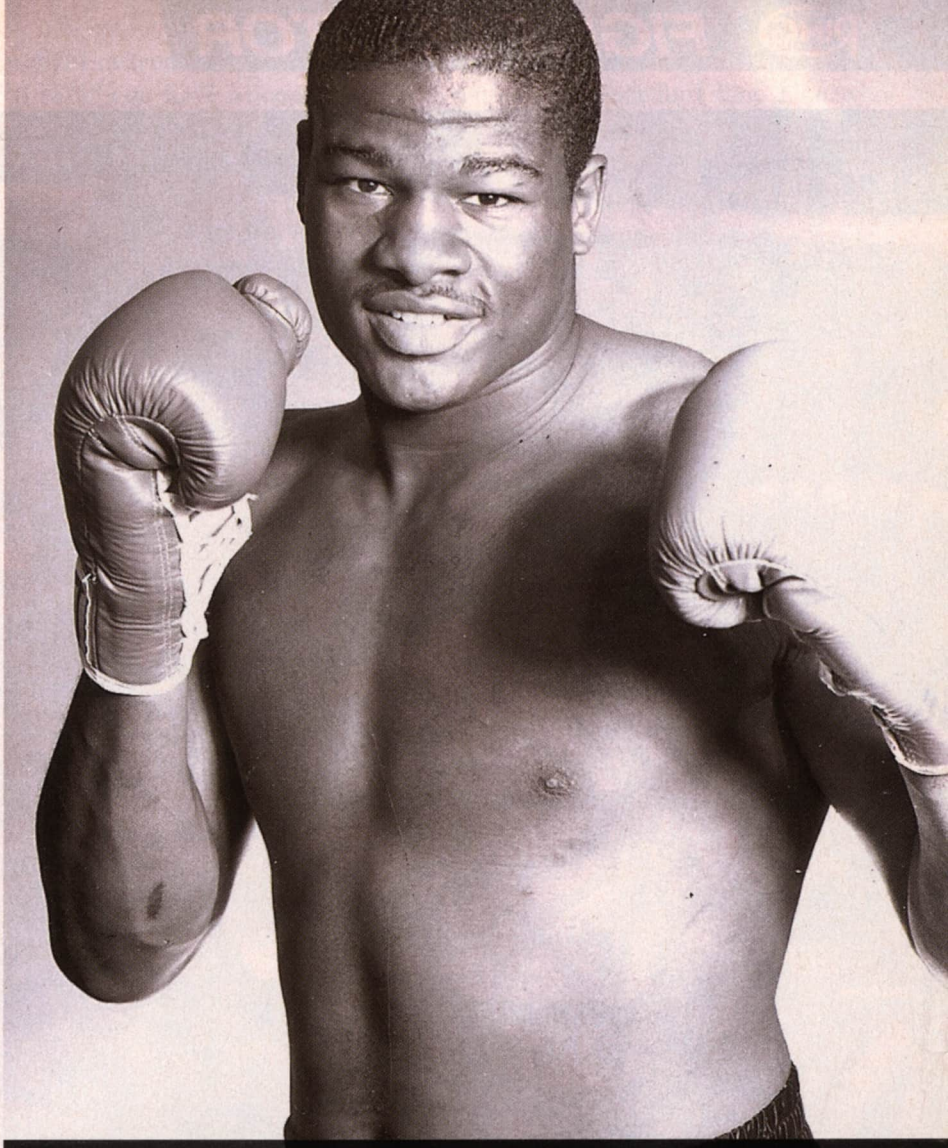
When Newman learned the WBC planned to strip Bowe of the belt, he called a press conference at a London hotel, Lewis' turf, where Bowe made the outrageous gesture of depositing the organization's belt in a garbage can. The WBC, as expected, began recognizing Lewis as their titleholder. "Now we can call Lewis the garbage picker," said Bowe. (For those wondering, the belt thrown into the garbage wasn't Bowe's actual WBC belt. It was a back-up belt made for Holyfield, which Bowe had purchased at an auction. After the press conference, Maloney tried finding the belt, but a hotel employee had allegedly fished it out of the garbage and returned it to Bowe's room.)

Meanwhile, Newman worked out a six fight deal with Time Warner that stood to earn Bowe $100 million. He also proposed Bowe meet Lewis in a winner-take-all scenario, which was just a lot of bluster. Bowe never outlived the image that he was ducking Lewis. Maloney, though, blamed Newman. "Riddick is a fighter, but Rock Newman has become bigger than Riddick Bowe," said Maloney.

Months later, Newman made another offer, which would earn Bowe $23 million and Lewis $12 million. Bowe even signed the contract on camera, but no one took the routine seriously.

Lewis was soon stopped by Oliver McCall, and Bowe lost a rematch with Holyfield, taking the sheen off of what could've been a great heavyweight fight.

WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED: Lewis would've outboxed the erratic Bowe and won on points.



Riddick Bowe (pictured) dumped the WBC belt in the trash rather than face **Lennox Lewis**. The two never met as pros. Image: **THE RING**

Referee **Kenny Bayless** was applauded for his timing when he stopped the fight between **Juan Manuel Marquez** and **Michael Katsidis** (left).

Image: **Mary Ann Owen-Fightwireimages**

TO STOP OR NOT TO STOP

By: **Dr. Margaret Goodman**

A boxer is out on his feet, and the referee steps in at exactly the right time to call a TKO. Would that TKO have become a KO if the fight was allowed to continue? Understanding the mechanical, anatomical and physiological similarities and differences between a TKO and KO enables the referee and ring physician to properly perform their job.

The brain, encased in the skull, is protected by shock-absorbing cerebrospinal fluid. Depending on the severity of the impact (force), the degree of acceleration (velocity) from a punch or deceleration (head hitting the canvas), this liquid cushion isn't always adequate. A

punch produces linear, rotational or angular movement of the brain. Rotational forces, where the head turns against its center of gravity, are believed to be the most severe due to disrupting cellular activities in the brainstem (back of the brain). The reticular activating system (RAS), located in the brainstem, is in charge of arousal. When disrupted, you see a KO.

I like to compare a KO to pulling out the plug on a computer. Depending on the ease in rebooting, the circuits will quickly regain function. In the boxer, hopefully little information is lost; otherwise, you see amnesia.

Knockouts typically bring a sigh of relief from the doctor and the referee. The boxer is out of harm's way. If the fighter returns to the ring or gym too soon, the risk of a more severe injury or even death becomes greater.

Most boxers, whether or not they have a TKO or KO loss on their records, suffer mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI) in their careers. Repeated MTBI is what produces a Punch Drunk Syndrome or dementia pugilistica. In the short term, impaired brain function results from impaired neurotransmission, where brain neurons fail to communicate with one another. There is a reduction of blood flow in the brain along with an imbalance of ions like potassium and calcium. In a boxer, this may manifest itself as someone who has lost focus or balance.

To assess a fighter in seconds and recognize deterioration of their cognitive function is a challenge for even the best referee. THE RING went to two of the best in the world: California veteran Pat Russell and Nevada's Kenny Bayless.

Russell, who has officiated more than 1,000 bouts, begins his fighter assessment in the dressing room.

"I prepare the boxer during my prefight instructions," Russell said. "(I say) 'You have to convince me you are OK. You can win by KO or decision, but you do not take a beating in my ring.' We are here to celebrate the fighter's heart, not destroy it."

As the event progresses, Russell assesses a fighter in terms of a "deteriorating process."

"Fighters are at their best when they enter the ring," he said. "I check their general demeanor. I watch how they respond to punches. Concussive blows are serial blows."

Between rounds, he'll observe the fighters as they walk back to their stools and visit the corners, looking for potential signs of injury.

Following a knockdown, Bayless has a mental checklist to determine whether he will allow the boxer to continue.

"First, I'll look into their eyes; secondly, I'll say, 'Are you OK?'; thirdly, I'll step back and motion for him to come to me; and fourth, I'll motion for him to give me his gloves," Bayless said.

Bayless believes all this allows him to assess the athlete's mobility and determine how he responds to verbal commands. If the fighter continues to take punishment, Bayless will remain close to the action so he can step in and stop the fight if necessary.

Declaring a TKO, especially with a hard-headed fighter able to withstand punishment, makes the referee's job the toughest of any official in the world. Russell cites his experience in law enforcement in helping him make snap decisions that are sound.

Bayless pointed to the lightweight title fight between Juan Manuel Marquez and Michael Katsidis, in November 2010, as an example of such a situation.

"It was a grueling fight," Bayless said. "Marquez was down in Round 3. In the ninth, Marquez hit Katsidis with a shot that hurt him. I knew Katsidis was in trouble. I gave him a chance to recover, but I got close to the action. I stopped it."

Bayless' impeccable timing was praised by HBO commentators Jim Lampley, Emanuel Steward and Larry Merchant.

Russell added, "I'll tell the boxer, 'Show me something.' I use the tools I have available to stimulate a response."

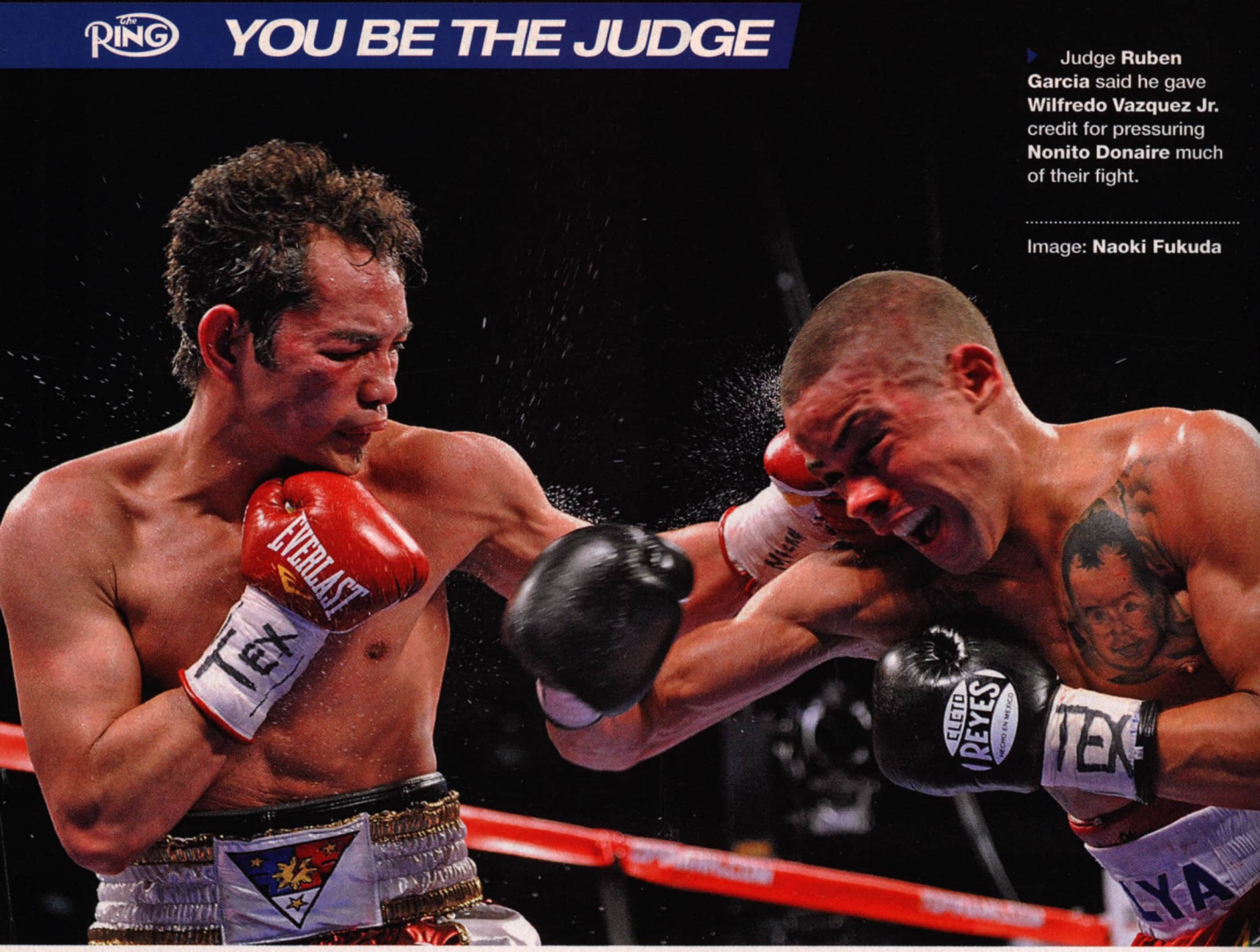
He'll look for a boxer who is not responding the same as he had earlier or is unable to escape punches. "When hit, his head snaps back more due to a loss of muscle tone. Then, it's time to stop a bout."

Both Russell and Bayless utilize the ring physician between rounds. A trained physician is attuned to subtle changes in a boxer's responses. I benefited from examining the fighter at the weigh-in. This would establish a baseline in how he walked, talked and responded to questions. During the action, I watched his eye movements, quickness in delivering and moving away from punches, and his legs. It's often difficult to determine whether weakened legs are the result of fatigue or head shots, but it is possible. The brain tells your legs and arms to move. Once cognitive function is disrupted, endurance and coordination declines.

It isn't always easy for the fans to see a transformation in a boxer's alertness, focus and agility – changes that signify physiological deterioration. Getting the physician involved between rounds not only helps the referee's assessment, it helps sell the upcoming decision to stop or let a fight continue.

Although we can't perform a brain MRI during a fight, performance clues can signify a problem.

"No one," Russell said, "will ever know how many lives we've saved." ■



Judge **Ruben Garcia** said he gave **Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.** credit for pressuring **Nonito Donaire** much of their fight.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

VAZQUEZ OVER DONAIRE?

HOW JUDGE GARCIA SAW IT

By: **Chuck Giampa**

One of the most-striking aspects of the Nonito Donaire-Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. fight on Feb. 4 in San Antonio was out of the boxers' control. It was the score of judge Ruben Garcia.

Donaire won the fight easily in the eyes of most observers, including official judges Levi Martinez and Don Trella, who both scored it 117-110 – or nine rounds to three – to give the Filipino-American a split-decision victory in his first fight as a full-fledged junior featherweight. I had Donaire winning 116-111.

Garcia scored it 115-112 – or eight rounds to four – for Vazquez, much to the shock of Donaire and many others.

I interviewed Ruben Garcia to find out how his score could contrast so sharply with that of his colleagues. And I should point out that because each judge sits at a different side of the ring, it's conceivable for one judge to see the fight differently from his counterparts.

Garcia brought up some interesting points. You might agree or disagree with his score but his statements are based on his many years of experience.

First of all, Garcia brought up a point that I recognize even if many don't believe it happened in this fight: Many judges tend to score close rounds for the fighter who is expected to win the fight.

Nonito Donaire won a major title in a third weight class in spite of judge **Ruben Garcia's** score.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

"I discounted the fact that Donaire was favored and scored each round based on what I saw," Garcia said.

And Garcia said he gave more credit to Vasquez for pressuring Donaire with his effective jab and felt that Vasquez outpunched Donaire. For what it's worth, Donaires landed 231 of 556 punches to 163 of 548 for Vazquez, according to CompuBox.

(It was disclosed after the fight that Donaire injured his left hand in the early rounds, which apparently hindered him for the remainder of the fight.)

Garcia also said that Donaire seemed confused several times during the fight, which caused him to stop fighting temporarily and resort to showboating at least one time.

Over all, Garcia felt that Donaire didn't do enough to win the majority of rounds.

Scoring a fight is very subjective. And, as I stated earlier, whether or not you agree with the scoring of this fight, I think it is helpful to hear what criteria a certain judge uses in a fight – especially when his score is different from the other two judges.

What was Garcia's reaction to the criticism of him after the Donaire-Vazquez fight.

"I've really put that fight behind me," he said. "I'm just looking forward to my next assignment." ■

Chuck Giampa can be reached at ***chuckgiampa@aol.com.***

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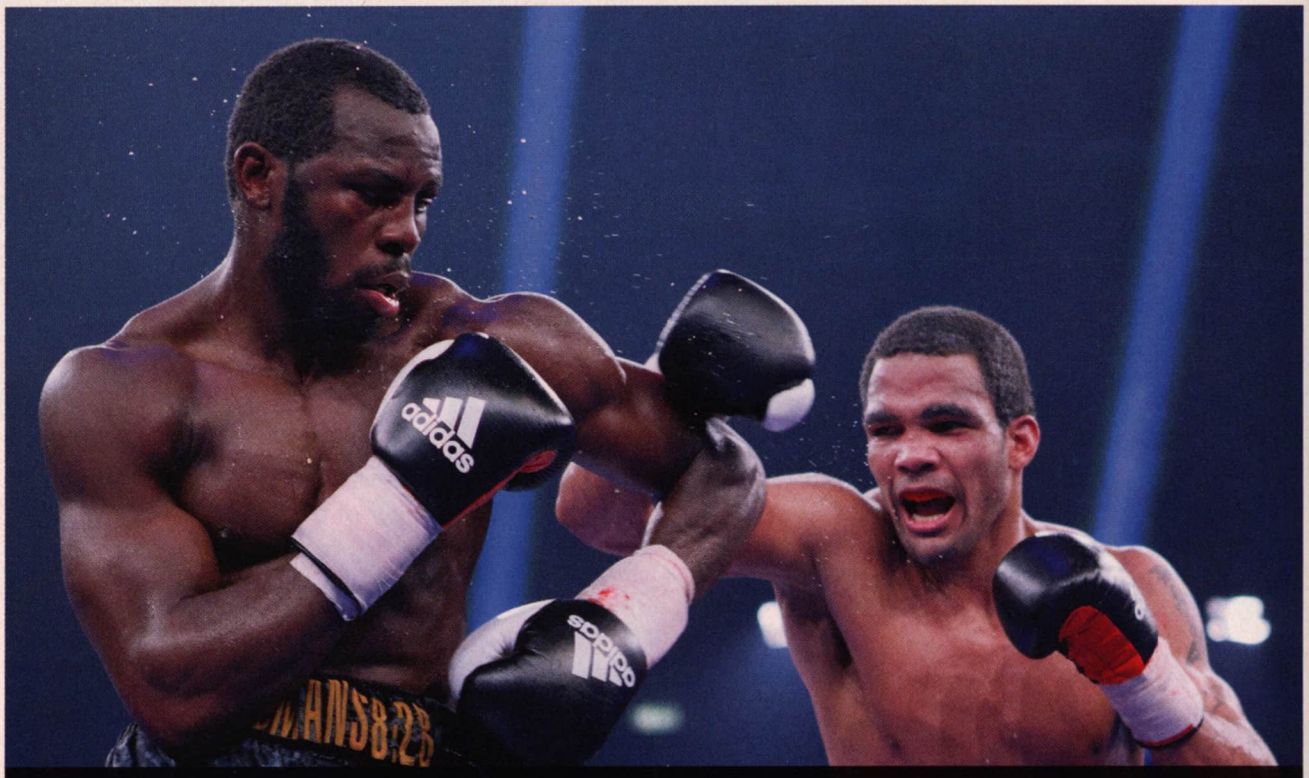

Steve Cunningham (left) gave a courageous effort but **Yoan Pablo Hernandez** went home with THE RING belt.
Image: **Marianne Muller**

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ UD 12
STEVE CUNNINGHAM

DATE: FEB. 4, 2012
LOCATION: FRANKFURT, GERMANY (FRAPORT ARENA)
DIVISION: CRUISERWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: HERNANDEZ 198½; CUNNINGHAN 197½
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): HERNANDEZ NO. 1; CUNNINGHAM NO. 2 (FOR RING CHAMPIONSHIP)
NETWORK: NONE

The scoring of the Yoan Pablo Hernandez-Steve Cunningham fight was absurd. The result wasn't. And the fight itself? Fantastic.

Hernandez, a Cuban, defeated his American rival by a unanimous decision to win the vacant RING cruiserweight championship and retain his IBF 200-pound title in Hernandez's adopted homeland.

THE RING title had been vacant since Tomasz Adamek gave it up early in 2009 to campaign at heavyweight.

Cunningham (24-4, 12 knockouts) appeared to be finished in the fourth round, in which Hernandez (26-1, 13 KOs) put him down twice and hurt him badly. However, the 35-year-old veteran survived and rallied to make it competitive.

Or so it seemed.

Two of the judges – Alejandro Lopez of Mexico and Pasquale Procopio of Canada – scored it 116-110 in Hernandez's favor, meaning they believed he won eight of the 12 rounds. The third judge, Massimiliano Bianco of Italy, had it 115-111. THE RING scored it a 113-113 draw.

The saving grace is that one can reasonably argue that Hernandez did enough to win the fight even if he didn't erase the bad taste left over from their first meeting in October, which Hernandez won by a sixth-round technical decision after he was cut and couldn't continue.

On Saturday, Hernandez used vicious body work to get off to a fast start in the first three rounds but he made his largest statement in the fourth.

Hernandez landed a short left that sent Cunningham to the canvas about half way through the round. Cunningham, obviously dazed, tried to get up but stumbled and fell again before staggering to his feet.

Moments later, Cunningham, still disoriented, went down again as a result of a flurry with about 40 seconds remaining in the round and was in serious trouble. Somehow he made it to the bell but his prospects appeared to be dim. Hernandez, eight years Cunningham's junior and brimming with confidence, seemed to be in complete control.

Cunningham turned things around quickly, though. He landed a hard right early in the next round that seemed to affect Hernandez both physically and emotionally as the Cuban began to fight more cautiously.

That allowed Cunningham to outwork Hernandez over the next several rounds and climb back into the fight. THE RING gave Cunningham rounds five through nine, giving him a one-point lead going into championship rounds.

Each of the last three rounds, in which both fighters were tired yet still determined, could've gone either way. THE RING gave Hernandez the 10th and 12th rounds, which resulted in a draw on our card.

The fight seemed to be up in the air after the final bell. However, the judges – particularly Lopez and Procopio – didn't see it that way.

Eight rounds to four? No way. Seven to five? Maybe. "It was a great fight and I take my hat off to Steve," Hernandez said afterward. "He is a great fighter and we put on an exciting fight. I am happy that my game plan worked and I am thrilled to be RING champion." Cunningham was gracious in defeat.

"I congratulate Hernandez for the win tonight," he said. "I fought hard and gave it my all. I know I'll be back stronger than ever. There were two warriors in the ring tonight and this warrior still wants the belt back."

– Michael Rosenthal

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. passed another test by beating **Marco Antonio Rubio**. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR. UD 12
MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO

DATE: FEB. 4, 2012
LOCATION: SAN ANTONIO (THE ALAMODOME)
DIVISION: MIDDLEWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: CHAVEZ 159½; RUBIO 159
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): CHAVEZ (NO. 5); RUBIO (UNRATED AT 160)
NETWORK: HBO

For the first time since his ascent to premium-cable status in the U.S., Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. confronted an opponent in Marco Antonio Rubio who was given a real chance of beating him.

Some wondered whether Chavez's weight – rumored to be an issue during fight week – and the fact he was facing another Mexican since 2007 could add up to disaster. But once more it turned out observers had both overestimated Chavez's opponent and underestimated "Junior."

Chavez (45-0-1, 31 knockouts) out-pointed Rubio (53-6-1, 46 KOs) by unanimous scores of 118-110 (Glen Crocker, U.S.), 116-112 (Duane Ford, U.S.) and 115-113 (Jack Woodburn, Canada) to retain his WBC middleweight title.

The difference in the match seemed to be size. The bigger and fresher man at 25, Chavez stalked his 31-year-old foe and pinned him in corners and on the ropes, bodying him with his left shoulder, corralling him with his left elbow and blasting him with well-leveraged right crosses.

Rubio was busier than Chavez and punched more accurate but that didn't amount to much. Chavez, who unofficially ballooned to over 180 pounds by fight time, was too large, too young and too tough.

"He was too heavy for me," Rubio said after 12 grueling rounds. "It was too much for me to handle."

Fighting before a partisan crowd announced at 14,120, Chavez demonstrated again that he can be a solid, entertaining fighter even if he never approaches his father's legendary status.

"Rubio looked only for a single punch, while I was working and winning, round by round," Chavez said at the post-fight press conference.

Then he smiled and addressed those people, including his opponent's vocal entourage, who doubted he could beat a battle-hardened Mexican like Rubio.

"We have shut them up," Chavez said, "mouth by mouth."

– Bart Barry

Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. (right) did better than many thought he would but he still came up short against **Nonito Donaire.**
Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

NONITO DONAIRE SD 12 WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.

DATE: FEB. 4, 2012
LOCATION: SAN ANTONIO (THE ALAMODOME)
DIVISION: JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: DONAIRE 121 ½; VAZQUEZ 122
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): DONAIRE (UNRANKED AT 122); VAZQUEZ (NO. 8)
NETWORK: HBO

After a disappointing performance in his last nationally televised outing, "Filipino Flash" Nonito Donaire, considered by many insiders one of prizefighting's very best, looked to win an emphatic and telegenic victory against Puerto Rican pressure fighter Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. before a large South Texas crowd. Donaire, 29, did manage to defeat Vazquez, 27, by split decision, but both the cost and decisiveness of his victory raised almost as many questions as they answered.

Judge Ruben Garcia curiously scored the match for Vazquez, 115-112, while judges Levi Martinez and Don Trella (all of the U.S.) both scored the match for Donaire, 117-110. THE RING also had the match for Donaire, 118-110.

"He's really quick," Vazquez (21-2-1, 18 KOs) said of THE RING's No. 4 pound for pound fighter. "He caught me and surprised me. He's a great fighter."

After establishing a decided superiority of reflex and craft in the opening rounds, Donaire (28-1, 18 KOs) appeared to relent in the middle of the fight, allowing Vazquez's pressure to disarm him partially. When Donaire's left glove was removed after the fight, though, the cause was revealed.

"I hurt my hand somewhere between the second and fourth rounds," Donaire said, raising a left hand-wrap covered in blood. "I could only move it a little bit."

But he moved it well enough in the ninth round to lift Vazquez's chin with a left-uppercut lead and follow it with a left hook. Donaire's unorthodox combination landed Vazquez on the seat of his red trunks, from which the sturdy Puerto Rican would rise to finish the round and fight.

"When I knocked him down in the ninth round,"

Donaire, of San Leandro, Calif., by way of General Santos City, Philippines, reported, "that was the end of the hand."

In his first professional fight at 122 pounds, THE RING's No. 3 junior featherweight did not appear to suffer a loss of speed or form. His inability to stop a fighter over whom he was heavily favored before their match, however, did raise questions about how much of his vaunted, jolting power he brought with him from the lower weight classes which he dominated.

Of plans for future strategizing with trainer Robert Garcia, Donaire said, "We'll go back to the drawing board."

– *Bart Barry*

JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR. UD 12 RODRIGO GUERRERO

In an all-Mexican title matchup, Juan Carlos Sanchez upset THE RING's No. 10-rated junior bantamweight by unanimous decision to win the IBF junior bantamweight title in front of his hometown fans in Los Mochis, Mexico.

Ruben Garcia (Texas) scored it 119-109, while Larry Hazzard Jr. (New Jersey) and Levi Martinez (New Mexico) tallied it 115-113 and 116-112, respectively.

Guerrero (16-4-1, 10 KOs) had taken the title from Raul Martinez in October.

Sanchez (13-1-1, 7 KOs) landed sharp left hands throughout the slugfest, as his southpaw stance gave Guerrero, 24, fits. By the end of the fight, Guerrero's face was a swollen mess, the toll of a competitive, hard-fought contest. With the victory, Sanchez, 21, claimed Guerrero's No. 10 spot in the ratings.

ISAAC CHILEMBA UD 10 EDISON MIRANDA

When Yordanis Despaigne withdrew from his rematch against Edison Miranda (35-7, 30 KOs), promoters scurried to find a suitable replacement. They ended up with a better fight than the original when South African Isaac Chilemba (19-1-1, 9 KOs) stepped up to the challenge, accepting the assignment on three weeks' notice, and established himself as a player at 175 with the unanimous decision victory.

Scores were 96-92 twice and 97-91.

Miranda, whose best days were at 160, started out fast but couldn't keep it going. A nasty head butt in the third round didn't help matters, opening a gash over the 31-year-old Colombian's left eye that bled throughout the contest. Chilemba, 24, found great success stepping inside Miranda's trademark wild punches and countering with hooks and uppercuts of his own.

Chilemba is now in line for a fight against a top light heavyweight, while Miranda, who is 2-3 in his last five bouts, is firmly established as a gatekeeper.

PAUL WILLIAMS UD 12 NOBUHIRO ISHIDA

Paul Williams (41-2, 27 KOs) dispelled the notion that he's shot – at least for a little while – with a dominating 12-round shutout of James Kirkland-conqueror Nobuhiro Ishida (24-7-2, 9 KOs) in Corpus Christi, Texas, on Feb. 18.

All three judges scored the Showtime-televised junior middleweight contest 120-108 for the 30-year-old southpaw out of Aiken, S.C.

It was Williams' first bout since his highly-controversial decision victory over Erislandy Lara, a fight in which he was repeatedly hit with overhand lefts. Many observers and fans alike wondered if Williams was washed-up after two sub-par performances, but he looked like his old self against the perfect foil.

The former pound-for-pound regular had his usual output – Williams threw 934 punches, landing 248 of them – which overwhelmed the 36-year-old from Tokyo, Japan.

"The Punisher" bullied Ishida on the inside and threw the harder shots. He also corrected some flaws, displaying more head movement and throwing straighter punches.

Williams admitted after the bout that he has room for more improvement, but he figures to get a significant fight with the rebound win.

TAVORIS CLOUD SD 12 GABRIEL CAMPILLO

Undefeated light heavyweight Tavoris Cloud (24-0, 19 KOs) escaped Texas with his IBF strap on Feb. 18, the recipient of a highly-controversial split-decision victory over hard-luck Gabriel Campillo.

Judge Dennis Nelson scored it for Campillo 115-111, overruled by judges David Robertson and Joel Elizondo, who tallied it for the 30-year-old Cloud, 116-110 and 114-112, respectively.

It looked like it might be an early night when the power-punching fighter from Tallahassee, Fla., dropped Campillo (24-4-1, 8 KOs) twice in the opening stanza. The first knockdown was the result of a hard straight right down the pipe from THE RING's No. 3 light heavyweight. The 33-year-old Spaniard beat referee Mark Nelson's count, but moments later found himself receiving another 10-count when a Cloud barrage sent him careening into the ropes.

But Campillo, THE RING's No. 7 light heavyweight, gathered himself and took control of the fight from round two onward, peppering Cloud with pinpoint shots from his southpaw stance.

His height, reach and deft movement gave the brawling Cloud fits as he struggled to get his punches off first. Unfortunately for Campillo, it wasn't enough, and he was

once again on the wrong end of a controversial decision.

A rematch could be in the cards, as an official protest had been filed with the IBF as this went to press.

ADONIS STEVENSON KO 1 JESUS GONZALES

MONTREAL -- It took Adonis Stevenson longer to get to the ring than it did for him to defeat Jesus Gonzales.

The Montreal-based super middleweight knocked Gonzales cold with a straight left hand 1:39 into the first round.

After plenty of pre-fight hoopla that included Gonzales (27-2, 14 KOs) bringing up Stevenson's criminal past, the Phoenix, Ariz., product started the bout timidly, pushing a few right jabs out, and trying to time his opponent's speed. Gonzlaes, 27, likes to use a "take a punch to land one" approach, but it proved deadly this time out. After eating two left hands early, he still hadn't adapted, and the third put him on the mat for good.

Stevenson (17-1, 14 KOs) now moves into the No. 2 position in the IBF's super middleweight rankings. At 34 years of age, the clock is ticking on him to make major moves in his career. Evidently, his new relationship with trainer Emanuel Steward paid dividends in this contest, and the hope amongst his camp is that it will aid him in landing a title shot by the end of 2012.

– *Corey Erdman*

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THOMAS DULORME KO 1 ARIS AMBRIZ

Puerto Rican welterweight Thomas Dulorme, 22, staked his claim as one of the best prospects in boxing, crushing Aris Ambriz in one round in his ShoBox: The New Generation debut from the Chumash Casino in Santa Ynez, Calif., on Feb. 17.

Dulorme (14-0, 11 KOs) ended the bout at 2:12 of the opening stanza, dropping late replacement Ambriz first with a devastating left hook. Moments later, with Ambriz (16-3-1, 8 KOs) on shaky legs, Dulorme stormed his foe and finished him off with a hard right hand, as referee David Mendoza waved the bout off without a count.

CRISTOBAL ARREOLA KO 1 ERIC MOLINA

Heavyweight slugger Cristobal Arreola continued on his comeback trail with a first-round KO of Eric Molina (18-2 14 KOs) on Feb. 18 in Corpus Christi, Texas. The bout was part of the debut telecast of Sho Extreme's boxing program, which airs the undercard bouts prior to that night's Showtime Championship Boxing.

It was fun while it lasted, as Molina, 228, stunned THE RING's No. 9 heavyweight with a right hand, putting the Riverside, Calif., fighter on shaky legs. Arreola, 245, regained his bearings quickly, though, turning the tables with a barrage of punches.

The end came at 2:30 when the 30-year-old Arreola (35-2, 30 KOs) won an exchange along the ropes with a huge overhand right which knocked Molina, 29, out for the count of 10.

It was Arreola's seventh-consecutive win since his loss to Tomasz Adamek in 2010.

JORGE ARCE KO 5 LORENZO PARRA

Mexican favorite Jorge Arce scored the 60th win of his rejuvenated career, a fifth-round KO of Lorenzo Parra on Feb. 17 in Mexicali, Mexico, the main event of an Azteca America-televised card.

Arce (60-6-2, 46 KOs) erased any doubt stemming from his split draw with Parra in Sept. 2010. This time around was far different, as Arce blitzed the 33-year-old Venezuelan fighter from the opening bell.

Arce, 32, dropped Parra (31-4-1, 18 KOs) four times en route to the knockout.

The first knockdown came in round three at the end of a straight right hand. Arce followed up with two knockdowns in round four, both instances the result of body blows.

In the following stanza, Arce finished the fight with another body shot, as Parra removed his mouthpiece and stayed down for the count of 10, ending the bout at 1:02.

Arce is now in line for a potential fight with Nonito Donaire at junior featherweight later this year.

VITALI KLITSCHKO UD 12 DERECK CHISORA

Dereck Chisora behaved like a jackass before and after he fought Vitali Klitschko on Feb. 18 in Munich, Germany, slapping Klitschko at the weigh-in, spitting water in the face of Wladimir Klitschko and playing a role in a post-fight brawl involving David Haye.

In the ring, the Englishman was surprisingly effective.

Chisora (15-3, 9 knockouts) fought a spirited fight, fearlessly attacking Klitschko (44-2, 40 knockouts) from the opening bell and landing more blows than the big Ukrainian is accustomed to.

However, Klitschko, 40, clearly outworked his 28-year-old rival – primarily with a stiff right – to win comfortably. The judges scored it 118-110, 118-110 and 119-111, meaning Chisora won only a few rounds. THE RING scored it 118-110 for Klitschko.

Klitschko threw relatively few jabs, a punch with which he normally dominates his opponents. His handlers later announced that he had torn a ligament in his left shoulder early in the fight, an injury they said would not require surgery.

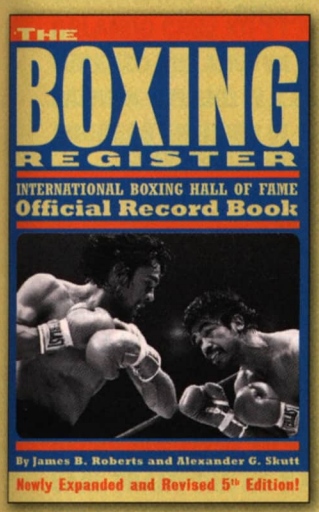
Without a consistent jab, Klitschko controlled the fight with his right, which he landed consistently even if he never seriously hurt Chisora.

Klitschko was frustrated afterward in spite of the victory

"It was not a perfect performance," Klitschko said. "... I fought against him just with a right hand. But, anyway, it was a good performance from Chisora. He had good movement. It's very difficult to hit him."

Chisora said he didn't execute his game plan.

"We wanted work inside," he said. "When I got inside, though, I wasn't working. Experience beat me today." ■



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FIGHT RESULTS

THROUGH FEB. 20, 2012

HEAVYWEIGHTS

VITALI KLITSCHKO W 12 DERECK CHISORA
DENIS BOYTSOV KO 4 DARNELL WILSON
RUSLAN CHAGAEV W 8 KERTSON MANSWELL
CHRIS ARREOLA KO 1 ERIC MOLINA
JOHNATHON BANKS W 12 NICOLAI FIRTHA
TONY GRANO KO 3 BRIAN MINTO
CHAZZ WITHERSPOON KO 2 DAVID SAULSBERRY
LUIS ORTIZ DQ 7 EPIFANIO MENDOZA
DERRIC ROSSY W 8 LIVIN CASTILLO
JOE HANKS KO 2 RAFAEL PEDRO
CHAUNCY WELLIVER TECH. WIN 9 MOYOYO MENSAH
ANDRZEJ WAWRZYK W 10 CLAUS BERTINO
MALIK SCOTT W 8 KENDRICK RELEFORD
SONNY BILL WILLIAMS KO 1 CLARENCE TILLMAN

CRUISERWEIGHTS

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ W 12 STEVE CUNNINGHAM
ALEXANDER ALEKSEEV W 12 ENAD LICINA
MATEUSZ MASTERNAK KO 4 MICHAEL SIMMS
BJ FLORES KO 6 HUGO PINEDA
ERIC FIELDS W 8 DERRICK BROWN
RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV W 10 ALEXANDER KOTLOBAY
TROY ROSS W 8 LUKASZ RUSIEWICZ
FIRAT ARSLAN KO 2 ORLANDO ANTONIO FARIAS
SANTANDER SILGADO KO 1 HUGO ANIBAL ABAD

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

TAVORIS CLOUD W 12 GABRIEL CAMPILLO
EDUARD GUTKNECHT W 12 VYACHESLAV UZELKOV
ISAAC CHILEMBA W 10 EDISON MIRANDA
OVILL MCKENZIE KO 3 TONY DODSON
JUERGEN BRAEHMER KO 4 JOSE MARIA GUERRERO
MARCUS OLIVEIRA KO 3 ANTWUN ECHOLS
DARIUSZ SEK W 10 SHALVA JOMARDASHVILI
TOMAS KOVACS W 8 STEVE KROEKEL

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

ADONIS STEVENSON KO 1 JESUS GONZALES
BRIAN MAGEE KO 5 RUDY MARKUSSEN
ROBIN REID KO 5 DANIEL CADMAN
ALEXANDER BRAND KO 6 GERARDO DIAZ
SHAWN ESTRADA W 8 TERRANCE WOODS

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR W 12 MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO
FERNANDO GUERRERO KO 4 JASON NAUGLER
SAM SOLIMAN W 12 GARTH WOOD
CLAUDIO ARIEL ABALOS KO 2 JUAN ALBERTO MUNOZ
MARCOS REYES KO 3 ISAAC MENDEZ
TADASHI YUBA KO 7 CARLOS LINARES
RAFAEL BEJARAN W 12 DANIEL URBANSKI
TORI NELSON W 10 VASHON LIVING

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

PAUL WILLIAMS W 12 NOBUHIRO ISHIDA
VANES MARTIROSYAN KO 3 TROY LOWRY
CORY SPINKS W 12 SECHEW POWELL
DEMETRIUS ANDRADE KO 2 ANGEL HERNANDEZ
GRADY BREWER W 8 EDVAN DOS SANTOS BARROS
JOE GREENE KO 1 NATHAN BEDWELL
JONATHAN GONZALEZ W 10 BILLY LYELL
DAISUKE NAKAGAWA KO 10 YOSUKE KIRIMA

WELTERWEIGHTS

THOMAS DULORME KO 1 ARIS AMBRIZ
JORGE PAEZ JR KO 4 OCTAVIO CASTRO
RAYMOND SERRANO W 10 KENNY ABRIL
SAMUEL VARGAS KO 1 MANOLIS PLAITIS

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

LUCAS MATTHYSSE TECH. WIN 6 ANGEL MARTINEZ
RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV KO 6 DAVID TORRES
ROBERTO ORTIZ KO 4 CESAR CHAVEZ
MIKE DALLAS JR W 10 MIGUEL GONZALEZ
ARMANDO ROBLES KO 3 ABRAHAM OSUNA
SHINYA IWABUCHI KO 7 YUJI WAUKE
BREIDIS PRESCOTT KO 3 JOEL CASSIANI
PETR PETROV KO 1 SERGIO JOSE OLIVAS
CHAD BENNETT KO 4 SAPAPETCH SOR SAKAORAT
DIERRY JEAN KO 3 RYAN BARRETT
LENNY DAWS W 8 CHRIS TRUMAN

LIGHTWEIGHTS

KEVIN MITCHELL W 10 FELIX LORA
ALEJANDRO SANABRIA KO 4 JHUNRIEL RAMONAL
JI-HOON KIM W 10 YAKUBU AMIDU
TAKASHI MIURA W 8 RJ ANO-OS
PABLO CESAR CANO TECH. WIN 6 FRANCISCO CONTRERAS
DORIN SPIVEY KO 7 VICTOR VASQUEZ

Dereck Chisora (left) gave a spirited performance but failed to upset **Vitali Klitschko**, who won a unanimous decision on Feb. 18. Image: **Marianne Muller**

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

VITALI TAJBERT W 8 JOSE LUIS GRATEROL
DANIEL RUIZ W 10 MARIO PEREZ
ALEJANDRO PEREZ KO 8 DERRICK WILSON
RONNY RIOS KO 4 JEREMY MCLAURIN
RICKY SISMUNDO W 10 FERNANDO OTIC

FEATHERWEIGHTS

ROBINSON CASTELLANOS W 12 ORLANDO RIZO
VIOREL SIMION W 12 EDGAR RIOVALLE
CHONLATARN PIRIYAPINYO KO 4 ARIEF BLADER
ORLANDO CRUZ KO 11 ALEJANDRO DELGADO
LORENZO VILLANUEVA KO 1 DIEGO LEDESMA
PATRICK HYLAND W 8 EMMANUEL LUCERO
ANDREAS EVENSEN W 10 JULIO BUITRAGO

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

NONITO DONAIRE W 12 WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR
JACKIE NAVA W 10 CHANTTALL MARTINEZ
MASAAKI SERIE W 10 YASUTAKA ISHIMOTO
SCOTT QUIGG KO 8 JAMIE ARTHUR
RENDALL MUNROE KO 1 JOSE SAEZ
OSCAR GONZALEZ KO 5 GERARDO ESPINOZA
CARL FRAMPTON KO 7 KRIS HUGHES
KID GALAHAD W 12 JASON BOOTH

BANTAMWEIGHTS

JORGE ARCE KO 5 LORENZO PARRA
TABTIMDAENG NA RACHAWAT W 12 ALEX BUCKIE
SAHIB USAROV W 10 YAN BARTHELEMY
ZHANAT ZHAKIYANOV KO 1 LOOKDIAW TOR BUAMAS
DAYER GABUTAN KO 3 JOEL RAFOLS

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR W 12 RODRIGO GUERRERO
CAROLINA GAITE W 10 MARIA MIRANDA
DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT W 12 RONNIE REX DALUT
MARVIN MABAIT W 12 REY PEREZ
GERARDO HERNANDEZ W 10 CRISTIAN FLORES
JASON CANOY KO 8 ALONG DENOY
PETCHBARNGBORN KOKIETGYM W 12 RICHARD GARCIA

FLYWEIGHTS

MILAN MELINDO KO 7 JUAN ESQUER
CARLOS VELARDE KO 2 PATRICIO CAMACHO
TAKUYA KOGAWA W 10 SHIGETAKA IKEHARA
SONNY BOY JARO KO 1 SAMUEL APUYA
DANIEL LOZANO KO 1 MANUEL GALAVIZ
RYU ONIGASHIMA KO 6 KEIICHI NUMATA
PETCH SOR CHITPATTANA KO 3 CHARLIE CABILLA

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

JOHNRIEL CASIMERO KO 10 LUIS LAZARTE
FELIPE SALGUERO KO 5 CARLOS MELO
LUIS ALBERTO RIOS KO 9 ARNOLDO SOLANO
JAVIER MENDOZA KO 7 ARMANDO VAZQUEZ

STRAWWEIGHTS

MARIO RODRIGUEZ KO 5 GILBERTO KEB BAAS
LUIS DE LA ROSA KO 1 GUSTAVO CORTES

Mariana Juarez (left, against **Susanah Warner**) has helped make women's boxing a popular attraction in Mexico. Image: **Ronaldo Schemidt/AFP/Getty Images**

MEXICO HAS PICKED UP WHERE GERMANY LEFT OFF

By **David A. Avila**

At one time, fights involving women in Mexico took place largely underground. Many were unsanctioned bouts in dingy arenas in towns with no systems of supervision. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Mexico's boxing organizations banned females from competing altogether. Thus, fighters like Mariana Juarez chose years of self-imposed exile in the Los Angeles area, where they could gather skills and respect.

The center of the women's boxing world at that time was Germany, where a pair of fair-haired *Frauen* named Regina Halmich and Daisy Lang were the gatekeepers to a world of lucrative opportunities.

Things have changed lately, though. Behind emerging stars like Juarez, Jackie Nava and Ana Maria Torres, the country that once banned women from fighting is now embracing them.

"It's much different in Mexico than when I first began fighting here," says WBC flyweight titleholder Juarez (32-5-3, 15 KOs), who early in her career turned down an opportunity to model for *Vogue* in favor of boxing. "It's been a good change. There is more support."

With the support has come television exposure and a growing fanbase, and, for some, headline bouts on cards featuring mostly male boxers. The kingdom, it seems, has a new set of queens – and they aren't blonde.

From 1994 to 2007, Halmich and Lang ignited a firestorm of support for female prizefighting in Germany. It didn't happen overnight. But through steady promotion and skillful displays, the duo caught the eye of sports fans.

"I was one of the pioneers along with Regina Halmich," said Lang (19-3-1, 7 KOs), who won world titles as a flyweight, junior bantamweight and bantamweight. "When I first started fighting in Germany, there wasn't much interest. Germany is very conservative and slow to pick up on things. Because of my looks, I was able to get sponsors. It was through sponsors that I had a career."

Lang, a tall blonde with an easy smile and an outgoing personality, was a former kickboxer who moved into boxing and quickly sparked interest with her combination of skills and appearance. It was a formula that proved lucrative for

Halmich as well.

"Regina Halmich and I became very popular in Germany," says Lang, 39, who was born in Bulgaria. "If you have determination and skills, you can become successful. Slowly women's boxing became accepted. I won many world championships both in boxing and in kickboxing. I liked challenging myself."

Halmich, like the Mexican women who would follow, began headlining boxing cards that included male boxing stars. Every time she defended her titles – which, over the course of her career, included the junior flyweight, flyweight and junior bantamweight divisions – it was the main event.

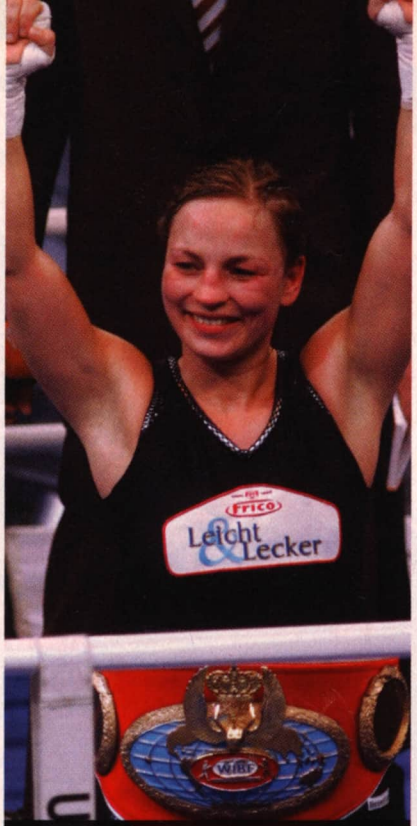
"She was the queen of boxing over there, just a completely different class of athlete, and really had the world at her feet," said Elena Reid, a former flyweight world champion who fought Halmich twice in Germany. "Regina did such a wonderful thing there and had a wonderful career."

German promoters offered big money to top international female prizefighters to travel to the European base, and they arrived from all parts of the globe. But Americans like Reid were the preferred opponents.

The Americans didn't hesitate to make the trip.

"It was double the purse whatever I made in the United States," said Reid, who fought Halmich to a draw in their first encounter and lost by split decision in the second clash. "It made me wish I was born in Germany. It was a night-and-day difference in pay."

The two German stars, Halmich and Lang, eventually met each other in a junior bantamweight superfight on May 2004. Halmich won by decision and Lang retired after one more fight. She now lives in Los Angeles and owns a sports and entertainment company.



Regina Halmich was the "queen of boxing" in Germany. Image: **Daniel Hiller-Fightwireimages**

"When I had nothing more to prove I decided to stop. I could have continued but I wanted to challenge myself in other ways," said Lang, who was known as "The Lady."

Halmich proceeded to fight for another three years, including a matchup with Southern California's Wendy Rodriguez in 2007.

"It was the main event," said Rodriguez, who was defeated by unanimous decision. "When they announced me, I got booed. But I knew that every girl that fights her was getting booed. Every time she punched me the crowd would go wild. Whenever I punched her the crowd would go quiet. It was a nice experience. I kind of knew I was going to get that kind of reaction."

Halmich fought one more time and then retired with an impressive record of 54-1-1, including 16 knockouts.

"Boxing in Germany has slowed down for women. It's not as popular as when Regina and I fought," said Lang. "Regina retired in 2007; I retired in 2004. There's not as much interest."

The decline of interest in Germany coincided with its rise on the other side of the Atlantic.

In 2011, Nava, Torres and Juarez held sway over Mexico's mainstream media like a trio of generals. Each time they fought it was televised throughout the country, and all three enjoyed main event status.

Their popularity has ignited similar fervor in other Latin American countries like Argentina, where fighters Yesica Bopp, Erica Farias and others are suddenly that nation's darlings. Still, Mexico leads the charge and its female world champions remain dominant.

A pivotal event took place when Juarez became famous for participating in a Mexican reality television show in 2007. She remains the queen of female boxing in Mexico, with fans admiring both her beauty and her impressive fighting style.

"When she's at her best, she's like a machine," says Ben Lira, who trained her while she lived and fought in the United States. "Mariana has all of the tools."

Torres and Nava are not far behind and the trio has sparked massive interest in the sport from young female hopefuls who are seeking to be the next wave of female Mexican prizefighters. All those aspirations are swelling the ranks of smaller weight divisions with prospects like Maricela Quintero, Ibeth Silva, Jasseth Noriega, and Isabel Ramirez, to name a few.

"There's still a lot of work to be done," said Juarez, who recently opened up her own gym in the heart of Mexico City. "Now we've shown that boxing fans do want to see us perform. It's a very nice change." ■

Alfredo Angulo has been more successful as a pro than he was as an amateur, which is typical of Mexican boxers.

Image: **Joe Klamar-AFP/Getty Images**

THE ROAD TO LONDON

THE RING WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE OLYMPIC TEAM OF ONE NATION EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH: MEXICO

By: **Norm Frauenheim**

NOT MEXICO'S FORTE

ALL-TIME BOXING MEDALISTS BY COUNTRY

1.	U.S.	109
2.	CUBA	63
3.	SOVIET UNION	53
4.	UNITED KINGDOM	48
5.	ITALY	44
6.	POLAND	43
7.	GERMANY	28
8.	ROMANIA	25
9.	ARGENTINA	24
10.	HUNGARY	20
11.	RUSSIA	20
12.	FRANCE	19
13.	SOUTH KOREA	19
14.	SOUTH AFRICA	19
15.	BULGARIA	17
16.	CANADA	17
17.	FINLAND	14
18.	EAST GERMANY	13
19.	KAZAKHSTAN	13
20.	THAILAND	13
21.	DENMARK	12
22.	IRELAND	12
23.	**MEXICO**	**12**

It's hard to imagine boxing without Mexico. Take away Mexican champions, fans and tradition, and the sport as we know it might not be around at all. Yet, a boxing super-power that has helped define and sustain the pro game for so long has been mostly missing on the Olympic side of the coin.

Unlike pro ratings from junior fly to super middleweight, you have to look far down the list to find Mexico in the overall medal count for the 23 Olympiads that have included boxing since 1904. With Olympic boxing about to celebrate a 108-year anniversary in London, Mexico has 12 medals – two gold, three silver and seven bronze, tying it with Denmark and Ireland. There are 20 nations with more, including the U.S. with the most at 109 and the Cubans second with 68.

Put it this way: In two Olympics – 2004 and 2008, American swimmer Michael Phelps won 16 medals, or four more than Mexico's boxers have won in 23.

How come? Money instead of medals is one answer. Poor Mexican kids turn pro early to feed themselves and their families. There's no protein in gold, silver or bronze. Yet, there's more to the story than just that. Politics, family connections and favoritism within Mexico's Olympic bureaucracy, a lack of organization and little support also have kept the nation from occupying the victory stand's three pedestals, according to Hesiquio Balderas, a Mexican journalist and boxing historian.

"It is a shame, but it is a reality that has been going on for decades," Balderas said in an e-mail. "The best are left behind."

Money is a factor, but it is just one of many that explain why Julio Cesar Chavez never won an Olympic medal and Saul "Canelo" Alvarez won't win one in London, Balderas argues.

"Lack of support from the authorities and the government discourages the families and the young men to pursue an amateur career focusing on the Olympics" he said. "So they turn professional to earn a living. They have no choice as there is no Olympic program that is worthy."

Without that choice, Mexico's young prospects immediately begin to prepare themselves for a professional career, which is more about bruising power than point-scoring finesse. Since Olympic boxing turned to computer scoring in 1992 and adopted headgear in 1984, there has been an increasing difference between it and the pro style. They differ so much, some say, that they might as well be different sports altogether.

Proof of that argument rests in the evolution of

Abner Mares (right, against **Joseph Agbeko**) fought for Mexico in 2004 Olympics. He lost in the opening round. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

the Mexican pro at the expense of Olympic medals. Consider Canelo, the 21-year-old junior middleweight champion from Guadalajara. Had he gone to London and won gold to complement the red hair that hints at Irish roots, his fame and earning potential might have soared beyond even what he enjoys today. The Olympics are a worldwide stage like no other.

But, Balderas says, "the Mexican style of fighting is suited more to the pros than to the amateur. Such is the case of Canelo, who lost many of his amateur bouts. Many other Mexican stars don't do well on the amateur circuit."

There are plans for some changes in Olympic boxing. Computer scoring, which was introduced after the 1988 scandal that robbed Roy Jones Jr. of gold in Seoul, will end after the London Games. In 2016 at Rio de Janeiro, traditional judges with scorecards will be at ringside.

Then, amateur boxing's ruling body (AIBA) has plans for a tournament open to pros in 2013. AIBA President Wu Ching-Kuo wants pros to be eligible for the Brazil Olympics.

Can it be long before Olympic boxers are told to take off the headgear? Muhammad Ali (1960), Joe Frazier (1964), George Foreman (1968) and Sugar Ray Leonard (1976) all won gold without wearing the padded mask.

If so, Olympic boxing and the pros might morph into a single style, a better fit for a nation with a boxing history rich in titles, yet poor in medals. Potential for many more medals already has been on Mexican teams with names that went on to become popular pros, both in Mexico and the U.S.

Some of the current names include bantamweight Abner Mares, junior middleweight Alfredo Angulo, featherweight Daniel Ponce De Leon and junior welterweight Jessie Vargas. Mares, now of Hawaiian Garden, Calif., and winner of Showtime's bantamweight tournament, and Angulo, a 154-pound contender, were Mexican teammates at the 2004 Athens Games. Ponce De Leon, a former junior featherweight champion, was with the Mexican team in Sydney in 2000. Vargas, unbeaten and now living Las Vegas with trainer Roger Mayweather, was with the Mexican team in Beijing for the 2008 Olympics. None won a medal, yet all have gone on to have good pro careers.

An irony is that Mexico's two gold medalists never did much of anything as pros. At the1968 Mexico City Games, flyweight Ricardo Delgado and featherweight Antonio Roldan won gold for the host country yet were forgotten not long after the Mexican flag was raised in their honor.

Two of Mexico's most famous pros fought in the Olympics but neither won a medal. First, there was Raul "El Raton" Macias, an Olympic bantamweight at the 1952 Helsinki Games, known in Mexico for pro titles and a subsequent career as an actor. Then there was Daniel Zaragoza, a Mexican Olympian at the 1980 Moscow Games who won bantam and junior featherweight titles from 1985 through 1997 before his induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Notable, too, is Alfonso Zamora, a 1972 silver medalist who won the WBA's version of the bantamweight title and successfully defended it five times. Another silver medalist, 1984 bantamweight Hector Lopez, was popular in the ring yet a tragic figure outside of it. He died in October of an apparent overdose in Mexico City.

There's no way to know how Mexico's greatest pros would have done had they fought in the Olympics. But imagine an all-time Mexican Olympic team of Chavez, Hall of Fame featherweight Ruben Olivares, Juan Manuel Marquez, Erik Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera, Jorge Arce, Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez and Ricardo Lopez. Hard not to imagine eight more medals for a country that has always made boxing count.

KEEP AN EYE ON

The process of picking the Mexican team for the London Games is ongoing. Qualifying tournaments are still on the schedule. A decision to go pro could happen between now and opening ceremonies.

A leading possibility has been **Oscar Valdes**, a 21-year-old featherweight from Nogales in Sonora on the other side of the border from Arizona. Valdes, a bronze medalist as a bantamweight at the 2009 World Championships in Milan, fought at the 2008 Beijing Games. He was eliminated in the first round.

Other possibilities include junior-middleweight **Oscar Molina**, middleweight **Juan Antonio Mercado**, lightweight **Jordan Gutierrez**, bantamweight **Elias Emigdio** and flyweight **Francisco Melendez**. ■

Al Bernstein looks back on 30 years of broadcasting in his new book.

Image: **Craig Bennett**

BEHIND THE MIKE

AL BERNSTEIN PROVIDES A HUMOROUS LOOK AT SPORTS BROADCASTING IN HIS NEW BOOK

By **Don Stradley**

Al Bernstein's entertaining new book, *30 Years ... 30 Undeniable Truths*, is one of the more humorous looks at sports broadcasting you're ever likely to read. Using a bright, engaging style, Bernstein touches on such topics as his remarkable 30-year run behind the microphone, Mike Tyson's nutty behavior and ESPN's ban on mustaches. But there's more to the book than jokes and nostalgia, especially when Bernstein discusses what he calls "the seismic shift in broadcasting."

Bernstein, well-known to fans of Showtime Championship Boxing, is disappointed that his field has become so "personality driven and opinionated." As far as Bernstein is concerned, the downturn can be traced all the way back to the 1978 Ali-Spinks rematch when ABC's Howard Cosell began reciting the lyrics to Bob Dylan's "Forever Young." A generation of boxing fans may recall the moment fondly, but Bernstein cites it as the beginning of the ego-inflated, talking-head journalism that reigns today.

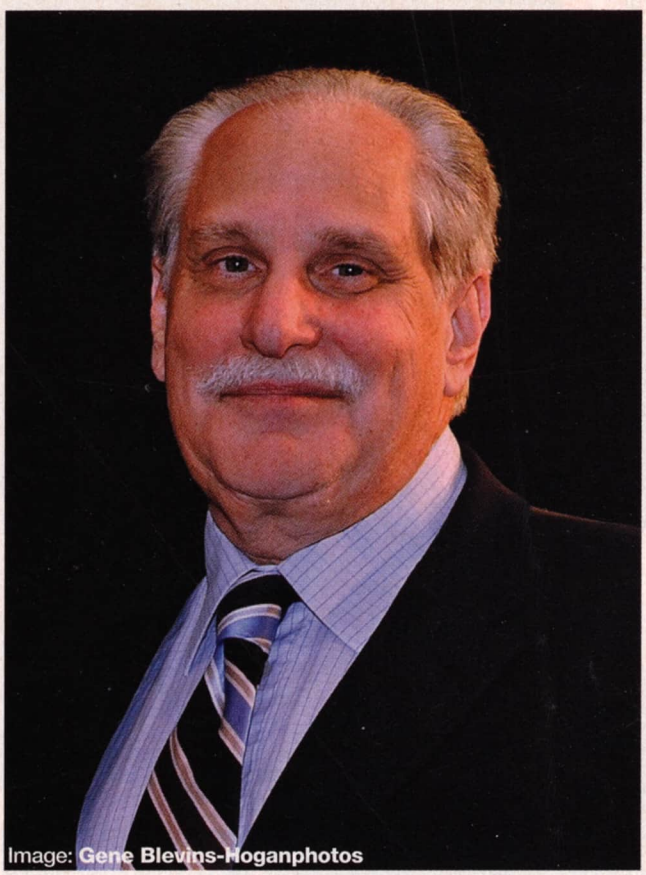


Image: Gene Blevins-Hoganphotos

"One piece of advice Don Dunphy gave me was, when you're on the air, it's not about you," Bernstein recently told THE RING. "And Don was a larger than life character. He enjoyed being Don Dunphy, the voice of boxing; he knew who he was. Now, sports broadcasting is just the opposite. Of course, not everybody is out there chewing the scenery, but there are more who do than don't."

Bernstein's book, published by Diversion Books and available this spring as an e-book or print on demand, is by no means an assault on his fellow broadcasters. Instead, Bernstein describes *30 Years ... 30 Undeniable Truths* as "mostly fun." In fact, Bernstein is such a charming storyteller that the book has the effect of your favorite uncle taking you aside and informing you that the entire family is a little bit goofy. True, he takes a few jabs at his colleagues, but he's playful, and some of his lines are so quick that you might have to read them twice. Besides, if television people are as thick as Bernstein describes, they'll not even notice they've been skewered.

Still, Bernstein predicts that many will be unhappy with what he has written.

"I don't attack individuals, but they all know who they are," Bernstein said.

Ironically, while Cosell provided the genesis of the me-first reporting style, the blustery tone of contemporary sportscasters was set by ESPN, the network that gave Bernstein his start.

"I was there in the late '90s when it really changed a lot," Bernstein said, recalling the "edict from above that (ESPN) shows had to have argument and debate." The change didn't sit well with Bernstein, who remains decidedly, and proudly, old school. "I don't have feuds. I don't pick fights. If there's a knock against me, it's that I am too malleable. Maybe I should be more hard hitting."

Still, he looks back on his time at ESPN with genuine affection. His hiring in 1980 sounds almost fated. He'd been working as a newspaper editor in Chicago and was known as the go-to guy when a boxing event was held in the Chicago area. A few TV appearances later, including one in which he bailed out a nervous and stammering Tommy Hearns, Bernstein was hired by the fledgling cable network.

At the time, ESPN survived on monster trucks, women's weightlifting and reruns of college football. Boxing, though, was enjoying a surge in popularity. Bernstein was fortunate to be on the tiny network's most popular show, *Top Rank Boxing*.

"Our ratings were good," he said. "I can't remember the exact numbers, but it was somewhere between the number of kids Evander Holyfield has fathered out of wedlock and the number of lawsuits filed against Don King annually."

Bernstein and most of his co-workers didn't think the network would last. They cashed their checks quickly, but there was a sense that something new and interesting was going on. "We felt like pioneers," he said.

The pioneer aura was cemented the day Bernstein happened to meet the TV comedy legend, Milton Berle. "He told me, 'You guys are doing with the cable what we were doing back in the 1950s with television.' And I said, 'The difference is that you guys were funny on purpose; we're funny unintentionally.'"

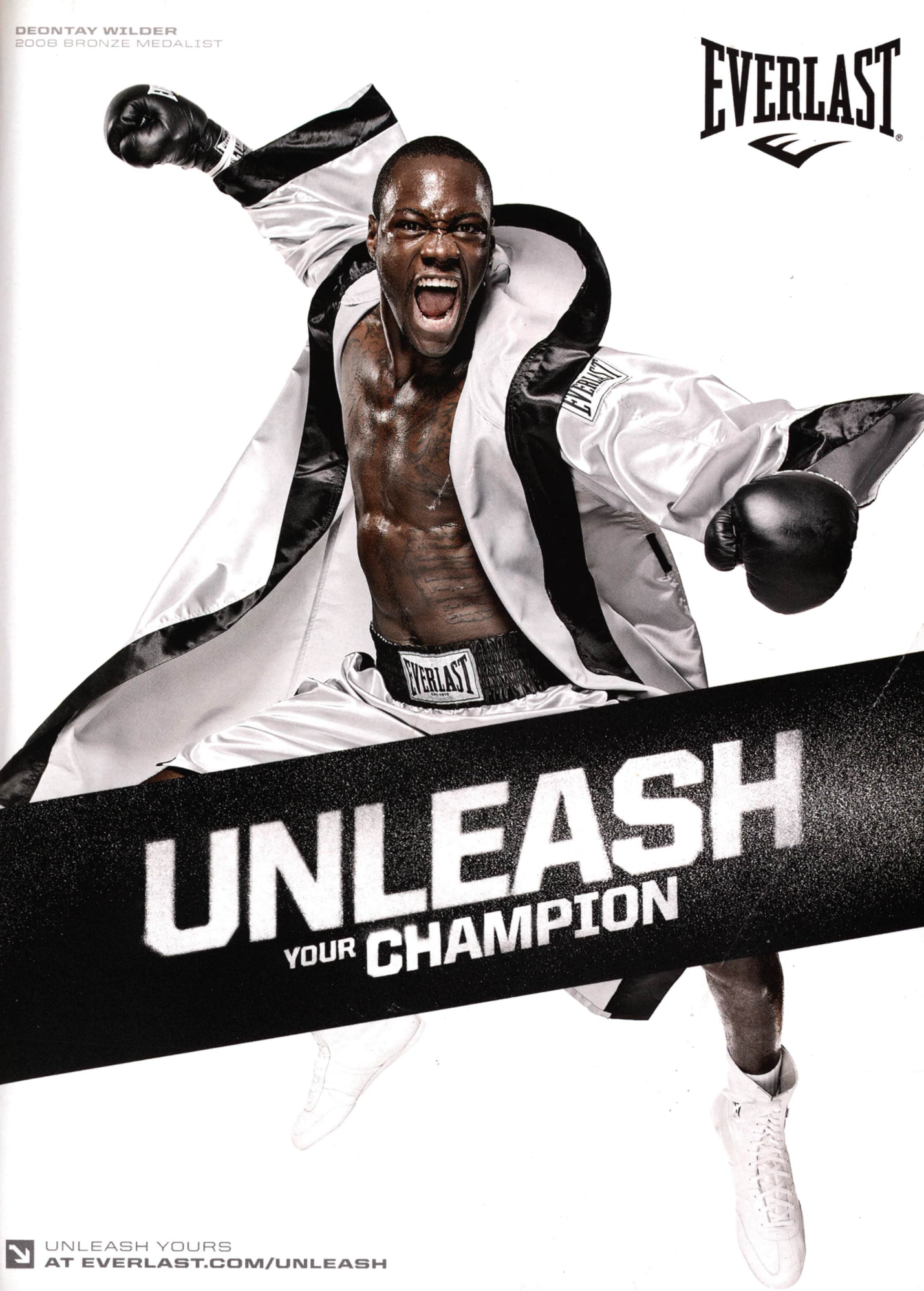
At heart, Bernstein is an entertainer, not a bully or a pundit. That's probably why he's never succumbed to the trend of confrontational journalism.

"I have never been really tempted to change," Bernstein said. "I don't think my DNA would allow me to do it."

While he has no plans for a follow-up book ("I'm praying to get through this one," he said), Bernstein shows in *30 Years ... 30 Undeniable Truths* that he's not far removed from his newspaper roots. He still has the chops to be a very fine columnist.

That is, if the TV thing doesn't work out. ■

DEONTAY WILDER
2008 BRONZE MEDALIST



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